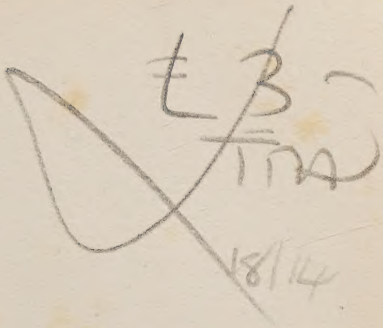

THREE ROWS OF TAPE

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A Social Study of the Lower Deck

by

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To

ADMIRAL

THE HON. SIR HUBERT BRAND

K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.

This book is respectfully dedicated

by

A Former Shipmate

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Three Rows of Tape

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THREE rows of tape around a blue collar! What do they mean? They are not a personal decoration, but part of a famous uniform. And they are more than that, for they symbolise a culture, a group of spiritual qualities, a manner of life. This particular culture, essentially English yet little understood by the English people as a whole, it is my ambition to describe in the following pages.

My qualifications for attempting such a task are very slender. To have served in the capacity of an Able Seaman for three and a half years during the Great War does not entitle one to speak with authority upon the lower deck of the Royal Navy. But although I have been a

careful student of the extensive literature which has for its theme the traditions and exploits of the Navy it appears to me that something still remains unsaid. Books of adventure written by gallant officers have paid generous tribute to the bluejacket as a fighting man, but the social life of the lower deck is still without an interpreter. Unfortunately this deficiency cannot be supplied by the bluejacket himself, for while he has the gift of fluent and picturesque speech he is apt to lose his self-confidence as soon as he puts pen to paper. Moreover, he lacks perspective. Ever since boyhood he has been moulded to the Navy type, but he cannot explain precisely in what ways his training has made him different from the rest of us. It might be supposed, however, that a study of the Lower Deck might reasonably be undertaken by "landlubbers" who submitted themselves to its discipline during the war. Some of these at the time of their enlistment already possessed mature experience of civilian life and so could make the requisite comparisons. During the ten years which have now elapsed since the Armistice I have waited with the expectation that writers better versed than myself in the sciences

of description and of social analysis would have given their impressions of the mess deck. If I now break silence it is still in the hope that others who served as "temporary A.B.'s" will supplement my remarks upon such a fascinating theme.

The war provided the occasion which enabled me to become acquainted with the Navy; but it is not of strategy nor tactics that I would speak, nor even of individual deeds of bravery, but rather of certain cultural standards which obtain in the remarkable society of men who wear the blue collar.

An important distinction must be drawn between the personnel of the Army and that of the Navy during the war. The Army, after the battle of the Marne, was in the main composed of civilians who had been compelled at short notice to acquire the habits and virtues of soldiers, and the most significant part of war literature, in so far as this concerns the Army, consists in books which describe the reactions caused in the minds of very sensitive and intelligent young men by the experiences suffered by them in the battlefields and trenches. These confessions, revealing not only the true character of modern war-

fare on land, but the heroism of the writers themselves, are of unique value and it is likely that they make a far greater impression on the public mind than do the military treatises by distinguished generals and others who seek to inform us how the various battles were or ought to have been fought. While in the Army, civilians who volunteered to become "cannon-fodder" take precedence in popular imagination over the much smaller number of professional fighters, in the Navy it was otherwise. Granted that towards the end of the war a large proportion of the ships' companies in dreadnoughts, cruisers and even destroyers consisted of ratings who had signed on "for hostilities only," these latter did not establish for themselves a prestige separate from that of the professional Navy. On the contrary, they were completely absorbed by the latter and cleaved to its traditions.

Besides the contrast between the Navy and Army it is necessary to observe yet another contrast, namely, that between the Navy and Mercantile Marine. The life of the bluejacket is a crowded one, and is adorned by splendid ritual. But his brother of the merchant service only too often is left alone with little else but

water and sky to occupy his thoughts. Authors who have experience of sea-faring life, as the term is understood by civilians, are apt to wax sentimental over the relationship between man and the sea. This peculiar form of sentimentality is entirely unknown in the Navy and would be scouted by the bluejacket, if indeed he could be brought to understand it at all. The sea in angry mood is formidable, as the bluejacket knows full well. Yet he has christened the sea the "ditch." There is, however, an element in common between the naval and mercantile seaman inasmuch as both of them in their combat with the sea must acquire a certain directness and integrity of mind. For it so happens that while in a society of landsmen much may be accomplished by the arts of chicanery, the winds and the waves are not influenced by political machinations nor have they ever been known to yield to an advertisement campaign.

It may appear strange that anyone should undertake to write about the Navy without giving details of engagements at sea. But those interested in naval matters are already familiar with authoritative histories of the principal battles in which our fleets took part. Many of

the minor skirmishes also have been admirably described by eye-witnesses. Obviously a person like myself, who has served in such a subordinate capacity, cannot hope to add anything of value to these accounts. And I shall not seek to portray horrors of war similar to those recorded by the learned privates, who have told us in such vivid language, in what manner their friends and acquaintances were killed or mutilated on the plains of Flanders. Everyone may exercise his own imagination and consider the effect produced upon the crew of a battleship when shells or torpedoes explode in their midst. It is more profitable to describe in detail the home which the sailor carries with him in peace time and alike in war time, up to his last bitter hour if need be, for this floating home shelters a social life of extraordinary interest. Such a description will by no means leave the fact of war out of account, for the men inhabiting the ships of the fleet are permanently organised for war and have certain qualities which could with difficulty be acquired by any section of the population in a pacifist state.

At the outset I should like to prepare the reader for a certain limitation and defect that

he will himself discover in my narrative. In attempting to interpret life on the Lower Deck I do not often give records of words spoken by bluejackets themselves. My excuse for this omission is that a seaman's routine allows him little opportunity for making notes of conversations and incidents as they occur. A heavy toll of work is expected of him and when he is off duty his mind and body, if not idle, are at ease. Moreover, I was not in the mood to treat the spontaneous utterances of my shipmates as a subject for literary "copy." At first an alien spectator of the Lower Deck, I soon surrendered myself to its atmosphere and was happy in that surrender. If I now try to set in order certain abiding impressions of my naval experience, it is with the knowledge that two pitfalls confront me. It is unseemly that a man should say much about the Navy after but a few years acquaintance with it. Yet I am its debtor. Mine is the difficult task to steer a middle course between a presumtuous garrulity and ungrateful reticence.

CHAPTER II

SHAKING UP

When one of the masters at my preparatory school had occasion to upbraid me for dreaminess and inattention, he said severely, "You want shaking up." The remark meant much. In the opinion of my critic, this habit of allowing my thoughts to wander was not only making me inefficient, less brisk and wide-awake than the young of the human species ought to be, but was also causing me to lose touch with the realities of the world outside me. I felt the rebuke deeply, for even a very little boy is quite capable of understanding a statement which is couched in such simple terms, yet designed to cut him to the quick. I was determined, however, not to suffer in solitude and so proceeded to divide my companions into two classes—those who had already been shaken up and those others, much inferior, who had never been subject to that

salutary process, nor was I slow to remind the latter of their unfortunate defect. This incident of my childhood acquired added significance for me when twenty years later I was discussing with a friend my project of enlisting as a seaman in the Navy and was told by him that I must use my own judgment about this, but I would certainly be "shaken up."

The prospect did not altogether please me, for in spite of a prolonged period of submission to preceptors at Public School and Universities I had always resolutely declined to be shaken up. But at last I knew that my hour had come and I must prepare to yield myself as a ready victim to the most expert "shakers up" that this world produces.

It seems necessary to explain what reasons induced me to seek a form of service in which my special training was not put to appropriate use in time of war. Patriotic neighbours could have pointed out that a person like myself, however unworthy a recipient of his elaborate and expensive education, was not at liberty just for the sake of a novel experience to decline the responsibility which would have fallen to his lot had he accepted the King's Commission.

This argument is irrefutable, and in self-defence I make the confession that it would not have occurred to me to enlist as a seaman, unless owing to a certain physical infirmity I had been disqualified for service in a more responsible capacity either in the Army or Navy. Even refused admission to the Army as a private, it was not easy for me to persuade the naval authorities to allow me to wear the blue collar. I was once present at a cinematograph entertainment where the principal character of the piece was "Old Bill," the mythical middle-aged soldier who was supposed to personify the imperturbability and humour of the British Tommy. When asked how he came to join the Army as a private he replied: "Through influence." Well, that too, is my answer to those who wish to know how it came about that I was clad in a bluejacket's uniform during the Great War.

Of course I was not encouraged to believe that I was going to be very helpful in the rôle I had chosen for myself. "Don't be silly," said a candid mentor when I first informed him of my purpose. "If you are unfit for the Army it is not likely that the Navy will want you.

Why, you would need to have been trained as a boy to run up masts and all that kind of thing. You could never stick it. Besides, if by any chance you were accepted for service, you would merely be a passenger impeding good men in the execution of their duty. Do have a little sense of proportion." Nevertheless the day came when the gates of Portsmouth Naval Barracks closed behind me. If I trouble the reader with a brief description of my first few weeks of service it is to help illustrate the manner in which every "new entrant" is introduced to the rigours of naval life. The subsequent chapters will be of a more impersonal nature, and will seldom be concerned with experiences which befell myself, but will be devoted rather to an objective analysis of the social environment in which I was placed. I may pass over the initial period when still in civilian clothes, with collar and shirt getting dirtier every day, I spent most of my time in queues before offices where naval kit was served out. But I remember that it was one of the happiest and proudest moments of my life when I donned the baggy trousers, the tight-fitting jumper and the dark blue collar with

its three rows of tape. There followed days of hustle and discomfort when in the company of several hundred other new entrants I was put through my naval paces by stout-hearted chief petty officers and when off duty I frequently incurred the censure of the naval police. These functionaries, to whom was entrusted the task of enforcing the general routine of life in the barracks, were in the habit of accosting stray recruits and asking them in stentorian voice, "Who are you, where are you going, what are you doing here," and the answers they received seldom seemed to satisfy them. The barrack buildings were situated around a large parade ground and the seamen dared not to walk across this space at any time of the day, but were obliged to run. The Navy, I discovered, is very fond of doing things "at the double." Yet on the whole the situation was pleasurable to me, for my mind was attuned to the acceptance of discipline in its strictest form. I still picture to myself the immense mess-room in which my own particular companions were quartered. It was a couple of hundred feet long and was divided by a row of iron crates fitted to be the receptacle of hammocks and kit bags, while the

rest of the floor space was occupied by mess tables. I may recall a certain incident in connection with these iron crates, which had unpleasant consequences for myself.

This was the beginning of one of my "bad days." It is well known that in the Navy, for weeks on end, one may be justified in feeling a contentment of mind, and then there comes a bad day when everything goes wrong. A friend of mine had sent me a parcel of books under the peculiarly mistaken notion that in the Royal Naval Barracks one led a life of leisure. These books would not go into my kit bag, so I had to stow them in my hammock, but alas, this led to it being too fat, and at a time when I ought to have been washing myself I was engaged upon the futile task of trying to force this absurd object into an orifice obviously too small to receive it. Meanwhile my mess-mates appeared to be deriving considerable amusement from my efforts. In the end I was obliged to place my hammock, like a stranded whale, on the top of the crate. So far, so good. Later in the day we were mustered in the gymnasium and made to stand in long rows, having previously removed our jumpers, jerseys and

trousers. We were then inspected by a midshipman, whose task it was to ascertain whether the new entrants had acquired habits of cleanliness. Any person not coming up to the Navy standard in this respect was asked to surrender his Station Card, this latter being the most important document in his possession, for it bore an inscription stating his name, his official number and other intimate details. Without this precious certificate he was not allowed to go ashore or enjoy some of the other privileges which give to life in the barracks such resemblance to a home from home as it may claim to possess.

Slowly the midshipman walked down the ranks and here and there he picked out some unfortunate seaman whose flannel was not quite clean or whose neck showed evidence of the blue dye which remains when a sailor has had a perfunctory wash without troubling to remove his jersey. What an excellent institution is the Navy, I thought, and how admirable it is that these high standards of cleanliness should be enforced among the new entrants. If people will not wash themselves properly then they must be made to wash, and if nothing but punishment will teach it to them then I am all

for the infliction of the severest measures. In fact, I quite enjoyed the sight of the victims surrendering their cards to the petty officer who was accompanying the midshipman on his inspection. In due course the latter passed behind the spot where I myself was standing, and to my consternation he shouted out the word "card" briskly and with a note of great asperity. I looked at my lily-white pants and wondered what was the matter, but I was presently informed, rather rudely, it seemed to me, that I had a dirty neck. Like a flash it all came back to me. Why did they send me those wretched books, why did I waste so much time trying to force my obese hammock into the ridiculous iron cage so that there was only about half a minute to wash myself, and why did nobody tell me that the dye from a new blue jersey leaves its daily tide-mark upon a man's neck! I was not given long, however, to meditate upon the disgrace which had befallen me. I was, of course, destined to hear more about that from the commander at 11 o'clock next morning. But for the moment I was required in the company of many others to perform acrobatic exercises of a kind which I had not previously practised

and of which I should never have thought myself capable.

The instructor clapped his hands—we went up the ladders and climbed down the ropes. He clapped his hands again—we ascended the ropes and crawled down the ladders—we ran—we walked on our toes and on our heels with quiet unnecessary rapidity, we did those most exhausting of all exercises, the rabbit run and kangaroo hop, for the whole length of the gymnasium and back again. We formed rings, apprehensively watching the movements of a sounding lead which was swung round in swift circles by an inexorable being in the centre, who seemed to rejoice if you did not jump quite quickly enough and caught the lead on your ankle. Served you jolly well right, of course! Some people are so slow that they would be late for their own funeral. And then we boxed.

We were lined up in two long rows facing each other. With him who happened to stand immediately opposite you it was ordained that you should box and with none other. In front of me there stood a person, who, I discovered, was a semi-champion middle-weight boxer from Yorkshire. He looked it too,

though I felt just a little bit doubtful about the "semi." For three rounds of two minutes each we fought. When the contest was over opinion was divided as to whether I had or had not succeeded in hitting my opponent. I am quite convinced in my own mind that I did not. Soon after I had regained my upright posture, some of the spectators thought fit to whisper in the champion's ear that he had declared his skill as a boxer with unnecessary emphasis and it was suggested that he ought to express his regrets. I got wind of this, however, and in order to keep the initiative in my own hands in the true Nelsonian manner, I determined to forestall the impending apology, and walking up to the champion, I told him that I hoped I had not knocked him about too much. "As long as I haven't hurt *you*," I said, "I am quite content."

So much for one of my "bad days" in the Navy, though it does not seem so very bad after all, now that I look back upon it. Life in barracks was full of interest and liveliness, and if we were kept on the move the whole time we had plenty of variety in our occupations. Although we could scarcely keep our eyes open in the afternoon seamanship classes (unaccus-

tomed as some of us were to early rising) we made up for it in the agility we were forced to display under the guidance of an unsympathetic gunnery instructor with a flaming red beard, who said that he didn't want us to walk, he didn't want us to run, but he wanted us to fly. Flight was never very much in my line, and when weighted with a six-inch shell, weighing 100 lbs, which at first I could scarcely lift from the deck, I never felt less like a bird in all my life. But fly we did to the best of our ability, picking up the shells, shoving them in the breech, then running round and picking up others. The atmosphere was one of great severity, and we were all made to feel very useless and incompetent in the gunnery class. After our best displays our instructor would whisper audibly, " Thank God we've got an Army." And it was as much as our lives were worth to display the slightest inattention during class. He was a formidable man, one of those chief petty officers of the old school, especially chosen to cope with the unruly civilians who were called upon to learn as much discipline in a few weeks as new entries in time of peace normally acquire in a much longer

period. Yet although in class and on the parade ground he struck terror in our hearts, off duty he was our counsellor and friend.

I have no space here to describe the numerous acquaintances I made in the barracks, which during the war contained an extraordinary mixture of types not likely to be found again in such intimate association. Suffice it to say that we got on very well together, and were united in our eagerness not to cut too foolish a figure in the presence of our critics, the real sailors who were watching our efforts and wondering what we should be like as mess-mates and fellow-workers aboard ship. At this time the question of "draft" was continually a subject of conversation among us. To what sort of a ship would they send us, a dreadnought or a destroyer, to the North Sea or to the Mediterranean? After being some weeks in barracks I woke up to the fact that it was possible by seeing the drafting captain to apply to join the ship of one's choice; and having heard that the *Queen Mary* was reputed to be "the happiest ship in the Navy," I hurried to the drafting office, only to find to my dismay that I was a few minutes too late and the list was already

closed. One of my mess-mates was more successful than I in his endeavour to join this ship, and so lost his life in the Battle of Jutland. Most of us, however, before going on active service, were destined to spend a few weeks in an "overflow ship" in the harbour. In due course my own turn came, and I went to one of those fine old battleships with two funnels abreast, which in their day had been the pride of the Navy. But while being impressed by the grandeur of the ship, I soon learnt that she was by no means a palace of luxury, for to my horror I discovered in my mess of thirty men we were all required to wash in a single pail, which, owing to the shortage of water, could only be filled once every morning.

But I had some quite enjoyable weeks in her, nevertheless. And then my draft chit arrived. I recollect most vividly my departure from the ship. I was ready with my bag and hammock on the quarter-deck when the master-at-arms, standing near me, received on his head the scattered morsels of a packet of sandwiches which my kind friend, the yeoman of signals, had thrown from the after bridge with the thoughtful intention of providing me with

nourishment on my journey to Scapa Flow. I left others to remedy the resultant confusion, and hurried down the gangway into the picquet boat. Thus, waving my farewells to those of my former shipmates who were still visible to me, I left for the Grand Fleet.

In the long train that went northwards a thousand very raw seamen, drafted from several naval barracks, seemed all in hilarious mood. How we laughed and joked over the veriest trifles! And on arrival at Thurso we had a pleasant feeling of adventure when the drifters took us to the famous anchorage in the Orkneys, for distribution to our various ships. Yet my spirits sank a little, soon after I had set foot on the deck of *The Ocean Greyhound*. A lighter is coming towards us; the watch is piped to fall in; and hastily we secure the lighter to the ship's side. It is full of coal and I look upon this vessel with no friendly eyes. To-morrow we shall get up at 4 a.m. It will be pitch dark, but the resources of our electricians will be equal to the occasion. On the upper deck is posted the list of the gangs in which we are divided and our several duties are set forth. Some must be down in the lighter shovelling

coal into the bags while others will regulate the winch or crane which lifts ten bags at a time to the boat deck, where are the chutes leading to the bunkers. I turn in at ten o'clock and sleep uneasily. Only too soon the Chief Bos'un's Mate yells " Hands to coal ship," and we all scramble on to the upper deck. On each side of the deck the watches are lined up. The Commander calls the roll and each man when his turn comes shouts " Sir " in a loud voice and doubles across the deck to join his gang. There are twelve degrees of frost and the wind is biting. Now we are down in the hold and only too anxious for work to begin. I cannot help thinking what a remarkable picture is before me, a picture peculiarly adapted to artistic presentation. The ground of coal and the jet black sides of the hold form an admirable foil to the figures clad variously in brown canvas suits, blue overalls and brightly-coloured football jerseys. But I am not allowed to indulge very long in these reflections, but am ordered to take charge of a large sack, so heavy that it requires constant exertion to hold up its sides and keep it open while four seamen fill it. As they shovel from different directions lumps of coal keep hitting

my hands and wrists, while every shovelful throws up clouds of black dust into my face. How much I appreciated a privilege which I won for myself later, when as an able seaman I was myself allowed to shovel the coal while a still junior rating held open the bag! At last comes the welcome sound "Hands to breakfast." There is no time to wash, and so, looking like niggers, we eat bacon and bread and drink our tea. Then back to the hold till 4 p.m., with another short interval for dinner. After coaling we scrub decks and wipe down the paint work. Everything must be spotless before we ourselves can claim the luxury of a bath. In the stokers' washplace, a small compartment, about fifty men at a time do their best to scrub themselves and put on clean shifts of clothing without getting in each other's way. At 8 o'clock, happy and clean, we sit down to a well-earned supper. But mails and provisions had still to be fetched and the master-at-arms detailed me for this duty, with a small party of others. We returned in the drifter at 11 p.m.

On the conclusion of these activities the reflection occurred to me—if only some stern master could have made me work as hard at my

chosen employment in civilian life as I had to work for the Navy, to what giddy heights of prosperity might I not have ascended, from which the reader will conclude that I was suffering severely from light-headedness. We had been at it for nineteen hours, it is true, but this was no excuse for such exuberant conjecture. At midnight a signal was received at the bridge, a laconic message, "Slip." There was soon heard the rumbling of the capstan hauling up the cable; and *The Ocean Greyhound* went to sea. This was, after all, to be my first experience of "shaking up."

CHAPTER III

ROUTINE

Most musical sound of Réveillè! "Heave o', heave o', lash up and stow, come along my hearties, throw a line, rise and shine." How often have I heard these words at 5 o'clock in the morning and with varying degrees of reluctance answered to the summons! Hastily I have folded my blankets and lashed my hammock in that tight narrow bundle which only can assume its proper shape if the lashings are arranged in a regulation manner. In the netting I have stowed the hammock "the sailors' best friend." It is reputed that in the water it will support a man for twenty-four hours. What careful provision the Navy makes for our safety! When the hammocks are stowed, what was our bedroom becomes our living room. It is a wonderful system whereby the utmost economy of space is secured. After

hasty ablutions we muster on the upper deck. "Both watches for exercise fall in." And then begins the time-honoured ritual—cleaning down decks with holy stone, scrubber, squeegee and swab. With bare feet and trousers rolled up to the knees we paddle in a stream of salt water pumped on to the upper deck. Advancing in rows we obey our petty officer's instructions, "Scrub for'ard," and again, "Scrub aft." In the ships of the Navy, except in destroyers and submarines, which have steel decks, the same routine is observed all the world over. It dates from the time of Nelson, and there seems no reason why it should become obsolete so long as the White Ensign is flown. Even the sarcastic remarks uttered by petty officers and leading seamen with the intention of encouraging the men who perform these duties, are themselves stereotyped, though the repertory of these witticisms is so large that it would require considerable ingenuity to add to it. Would anyone be so bold as to suggest that this ritual should cease, and that in place of the rows of young seamen engaged in both exercise and social entertainment there should be instituted some mechanical contrivance capable of performing

their work equally well? To a sailor of the old school the very thought would seem sacrilege. Yet in an institution like the Navy, where cold logic plays such an important part, the ceremony of scrubbing decks would undoubtedly be abolished if it did not serve a useful purpose. Very elaborate machines would be required to clean decks efficiently, and even if the nation were to approve the expense of installing these, it would not be on that account possible to reduce the ships' company, and so achieve an economy. For the complement of a battleship must correspond to the numbers of ratings needed to man the guns and attend to many other implements of war, and provision must be made for these ratings to relieve each other in watches right through the night and day, if need be. Thus the total number of bluejackets borne on each ship is a certain minimum determined by military requirements. But the men cannot be permanently at action stations, nor are the guns and torpedoes being constantly fired. It is a principle of naval training, however, that the ship's company should be kept active and alert. This explains how it comes about that the seamen who put a superfluity of

vigour into scrubbing decks are able to execute grand ceremonial, and at certain times of the day have even been known "to paint the lily and gild refined gold."

So many duties are performed aboard a man-of war that a mere enumeration of them would occupy a volume in itself. My object here is not to give a complete account of naval routine, but to note its principal characteristics, and in particular, to inquire how it affects the personalities of those who are subject to it.

It may perhaps be worth while to analyse the meaning of this word routine, and to draw a distinction between naval routine and that which prevails in civilian life. In many institutions routine kills initiative, and is even bad for health. The clerk who repeats every day of his life certain actions is often a creature to be pitied. Each morning he "strap-hangs" in a Tube and goes to a city office. There he sits on a stool and day by day makes entries in a ledger. To thousands of such, war came as a relief to their ennui. Romance, even accompanied by danger, seemed preferable to such a humdrum existence. In the factories also, large sections of the civilian population are now subject to that

type of routine which is definitely injurious to mind and body. But routine in the Navy, as in the Army, is devoted to a personal object. The man who has submitted to it is different and in a certain respect superior to the man who has not. While the industry of the clerk has perhaps resulted in a number of ledgers being neatly filled in, and that of the factory-worker has caused to be assembled certain parts of manufactured articles in the quickest and most economical manner, the bluejacket's routine, although admittedly directed to the perfection of a machine of war, has also added something to himself.

For the purpose of war not only physical fitness is desirable, but above all the nerves require fortifying by artificial means. Certain actions which are necessary in the time of battle or danger are rehearsed on innumerable occasions. This is, of course, for the avoidance of panic. Again and again the guns' crews close up so that every member may perform his task with a mechanical precision. If it be assumed that some members of the crew are killed by gunfire, the remainder must become accustomed to carry on short-handed. And the same readi-

ness to change duties at short notice is required of men performing other exercises of war. It might be contended that sailors are submitting themselves to an unnatural manner of life in consenting to the performance of these repetitive actions. A great deal of cant, however, is taught with regard to what is, or is not, natural to man. Was it natural behaviour when a few years ago the Lascars employed on a large passenger liner made a rush for the boats when the ship was sinking and caused many passengers to lose their lives? Obviously, if we are to retain for the word "natural" any dignity of meaning we must answer that such conduct on the part of the Lascars was unnatural and something less than human. That the sailor acquires this discipline and steadiness of nerve by means of routine does not make him cease to be a natural man, but, on the contrary, gives him better right to this title. Apart from the fact that the bluejacket receives an access of personal worth by virtue of his routine, his accomplishments serve a national purpose. He is especially chosen, and his mind and body moulded that he may be a bulwark against his country's enemies.

This training, which has for its object that

those serving in a battleship should have nerves of steel, is supplemented by other types of routine—routine for cleanliness, routine for health, and even routine for comfort, for it need not be supposed that there is any particular virtue in discomfort. The routine for health and cleanliness has already been touched upon in my reference to the ritual of scrubbing decks. There is no question that two birds are here killed with one stone. In the first instance, it is obvious that where many men are congregated in a small space it is essential that every part of the ship should be kept spotlessly clean. The purifying influence of the salt water when vigorously applied by a scrubber on bare boards is indisputable. Moreover, it tends to consolidate the health of the seamen that they should have to perform this daily rite in all weathers for an hour and a half before breakfast. And there is no need to insist upon the benefit derived from physical drill after Divisions and from boat pulling, which is practised with great vigour by all the younger seamen under the supervision of competent instructors. While, in addition to these exercises which belong to ordinary naval routine, at special

seasons of the year as the opportunity arises, sports are organised so that bluejackets may indulge in such pastimes as football, running and boxing.

The zeal for cleanliness does not stop at the upper deck, for its influence is felt in every part of the ship. Every day the mess decks and tables are scrubbed, the mess gear is burnished and lockers made to shine, and then, of course, there is the brass-work. It has occasionally been hinted that in the Navy too much attention is devoted to "spit and polish." But after frequent participation in the ceremony of "Quarters clean guns," I am of opinion that we had little to complain of in that respect. I have often burnished and burnished again some piece of metal. Granted that it was as bright as it could be at the end of ten minutes, but what matter! In the intervals between rubbing we engaged in pleasant conversation with our shipmates likewise employed, or refreshed our minds by contemplating the waves and the sky or perhaps the graceful flight of seagulls following our course. When an officer came by we naturally gave an extra rub and pretended that our minds were entirely concentrated upon this

exercise. But nobody was deceived, least of all the officer. I have seldom been in a ship in which I was required to attend to brass-work for more than half an hour a day, and instead of regarding this duty as a grievance, I welcomed it as a relief from much more strenuous occupations.

While the bluejacket must spend part of his time in eliminating every speck of dirt or rust from his floating home, he also keeps his person and clothing scrupulously clean. This he does even in circumstances when shortage of water, limited accommodation in the wash-places and the need for hustle, if his toilet is to be completed in the time allotted for it, make this virtue of cleanliness far harder to achieve than it is for civilians who at their leisure can go to a well-appointed bathroom. In the life of the bluejacket there can be no place for such idiosyncracies of habit or behaviour as have their expression in the choice of equipment or apparel. This has an important effect upon his mentality inasmuch as he is free from the type of vanity which is shown in a man's desire to be different from his neighbour in small things. There is a fixed ritual governing the management of a sailor's

kit. Every article of clothing is rapidly turned inside out before it is put away and folded in a regulation manner. The result of these orderly habits is that the operations of dressing and undressing are performed almost mechanically, with the minimum expenditure of mental and nervous energy. It is not an infrequent occurrence for sailors to be given only five minutes in which to double down from the upper deck to their messes and change from blue serge suits into " ducks " or *vice versa*, and to re-assemble in their original places looking spick-and-span with black silks beautifully creased and tied in a neat terminal bow. At meal-times also the routine of dishing up has been brought to the last degree of efficiency by the men themselves, who are anxious to conclude this operation with the utmost dispatch. Sailors have learnt not to waste time over inessentials, and to be sluggardly, or " helpless," as they themselves describe this, is counted a most lamentable decline from their common standard.

In this book I am concerned with a type and not with individuals. Routine has given the bluejacket steadiness of nerve, health and cleanliness, it has made him energetic and

alert. Moreover, it has imbued him with a consciousness that he is not an end in himself, but an instrument. His personality is no longer a private one. In this latter respect he differs from most civilians, who consider their souls to be their private possession. In later chapters I shall refer to other distinctive qualities of the bluejacket, but while still on the subject of routine, it is worth while to insist that the range of his activities is very wide. Though the particular skill and resource needed by the seamen in the old sailing-ship days find little scope for their exercise in a modern man-of-war, an intellectual effort of a more formidable kind is required to deal with the numerous technical apparatus which have been introduced during the industrial era. Certain branches of the seaman class have now become expert mechanics. It is not an exaggeration to say that the building of a modern battleship places a greater strain upon our industrial resources and calls for greater inventive capacity than any other thing which the English people creates at the present time. It contains not only the most powerful marine engines, but the most delicate instruments that mechanical genius can contrive. Besides the

elaborate electrical equipment of a ship, so arranged that if any part is injured by gunfire the various circuits can still be re-established by alternative means, there are the complex mechanisms of gun and torpedo, not to mention paravanes and mines. All these require intelligent handling and constant attention if they are to be maintained in a condition of serviceability. Yet, although these are products of the modern industrial age, the men who make use of them must still retain the old naval discipline. At the great testing time the implements of war will not be operated under the conditions to which civilian mechanics are accustomed, but when the sound of guns rends the air and when everybody is attuned to a pitch of excitement such as can only be reached when issues of life and death are at stake, it is then that steady nerves will be required, and it is difficult to see how at any period the Navy could afford to do without the disciplinary training which in the past has been found adequate to save men from panic in times of stress.

In order that this special type of man should be created, it is necessary that new entries to the Royal Navy should be enlisted for long service.

It is not easy to make a sailor, as this term is understood in the Navy, and so those who aspire to become adept in this profession are required to begin early. Navy boys are enlisted at the age of sixteen, and serve in a shore establishment for two years before they are sent to sea. These boys must sign on for twelve years' service of "man's time," which does not begin until they are "rated" Ordinary Seamen at the age of eighteen or so. At the expiry of his twelve years a naval rating is at liberty to sign on "for his pension," and this entails another ten years service. A large proportion of the personnel in the Navy avail themselves of this opportunity. Being sailors, they prefer to remain so, until such time as, still in their prime according to civilian computation, they are adjudged too old to participate in the life of the Lower Deck.

There is another important effect of naval routine which requires consideration. I refer to the homogeneity of outlook and experience engendered in a society whose members are subject to a common system of discipline. It will be realised at once how greatly the organisation of the fleet personnel is facilitated thereby. A rating can, if required, be drafted to any

station and without the least difficulty understand what duties will be expected of him in his new ship. No matter whether the bluejacket finds himself in the Atlantic or in the Mediterranean fleet, whether he be in the waters of China, India or South America, he will hear the same bugle trills, the same "pipes," when the call-boys with their penetrating voices pass along the mess decks shouting out the orders which govern his life. "Hands of the mess for spuds," "Hands of the mess for meat," and the ever-welcome "Up spirits" indicate that the naval authorities have not forgotten to supply him with bodily sustenance. All these "pipes," so described because the call-boy blows a shrill whistle to attract attention before delivering the commands, have the maximum brevity which is consistent with their intelligibility. "Away first cutter" is sufficient to inform a crew of twelve seamen chosen for this duty, that they are required to man their boat with the utmost dispatch. "Hands abandon ship" calls forth multifarious activities on the part of the ship's company, every member of which has to play his allotted part in this evolution. Some man the boats and others rapidly construct rafts from

mess-stools, tables, rum-casks and other detachable wooden implements. "Hands fall in for General Drill" is a preliminary pipe which is succeeded by a series of others such as "Port watch out fire engine." "Landing party provide arms and fall in at the double" explains itself. "Prepare to tow aft" indicates that we are to assume that the ship behind cannot proceed under her own steam, and must be towed by wire hawsers, the ends of which need to be carried in small boats and conveyed by grass line to the forecastle of the disabled ship—a difficult exercise in rough weather. For "Action Stations" no pipe is sounded, but in big ships there is a bugle-call and in small ones a buzzer or rattler, the sound of which is electrically conveyed to all compartments. Every man has rehearsed his duties beforehand. The guns' crews close up, and all ranks and ratings are intent upon their particular job. Other "pipes" direct the bluejackets' attention to matters of cleanliness. In "Hands to Quarters clean Guns," the term "Gun" is a comprehensive one made to include everything which has a square inch of steel or brass capable of being polished. "Scrub ditty-boxes," a Saturday

morning call, decrees that even the precious little wooden receptacle of the sailor's private treasures must conform to Navy standards and its grained surface be creamy white. "Clean hammocks are to be stowed in the morning" is the signal for periodical renewal of the sailor's bedding, while "Haul taut and belay clothes-lines" is an instruction to take up blankets, duck suits and other clothes to be dried on the upper deck. But undoubtedly the most popular "pipe," apart from "Hands fall in for payment," which naturally sounds like heavenly music in a sailor's ears, is the old-fashioned "Hands make and mend clothes." This has lost its original signification, for uniform is now obtainable at the Paymaster's store, but it still indicates that the majority of the ship's company may be relieved of routine duties between noon and seven bells. These are golden hours indeed, when, in summer weather, the bluejackets may be seen stretched out on the forecastle enjoying sweeter sleep than any civilian knows.

Members of the seamen branch are required either to specialise in gunnery or else to join the torpedo party which not only looks after torpedoes, but attends to all the electrical

appliances of the ship such as dynamos, searchlights, ventilation fans and gun circuits. The blue collar is also worn by signalmen and wireless telegraphists and by the stokers. In the days when the Navy ships used coal fuel, a man who kept his watch in the stoke-hold had to undertake the severest form of manual labour. Nowadays, however, the number of stokers is greatly reduced, and they are employed to supervise the burning of the oil-sprayers which make the steam. The men serving in these four branches live in " broadside messes " and have a common social atmosphere. Their Petty Officers wear the " fore and aft " rig—that is to say, a peaked cap and clothes of civilian cut, though with distinctive naval badges, but they are naturally brought into close contact with the bluejackets. Other branches on the Lower Deck include cooks, stewards, writers and artisan ratings such as shipwrights, blacksmiths and plumbers, and the engine-room artificers, who are specially trained mechanics. The master-at-arms is the senior representative of the ship's police, and his assistants are called corporals. These branches, however, while they perform necessary duties and, of course, share with the seamen the hazards of

war, are yet separated from the latter not only by a difference of uniform, but in their outlook, which more nearly resembles that of civilians. The Royal Marines maintain military traditions aboard ship. They help to man the guns, take part in ceremonial, and incidently supply nearly all the officers' servants. Like the seamen, they live in broadside messes which, however, are always placed aft, next to the officers' quarters. This arrangement is a relic of the days when the seamen were recruited by press-gang and were occasionally liable to mutiny. However familiar these details of organisation may be to some of my readers, it seemed necessary to recount them in order to build up a fairly complete picture of the Lower Deck.

An element of naval routine, which on occasion makes life afloat especially arduous, is watch-keeping, and it must be confessed that a considerable effort is required to accustom oneself to a habit of life in which the natural divisions of day and night are ignored. Starting from 8 p.m. the succeeding twenty-four hours are divided into seven watches. The First, Middle and Morning are embraced in the period up to 8 a.m., after which come the Forenoon and

Afternoon, each four-hour watches, and then the First and Last dog watches, the latter being of only two hours. If the ship's company is in four watches, it means that each man keeps every fourth watch, and thus it takes him four days before he repeats the identical cycle of his first day. Three times out of four the seaman's night is broken by keeping the First, Middle or Morning watch, while it is of frequent occurrence that even when he is not " on watch," his services are demanded for some job requiring all hands. But while to be in four watches is easily tolerable, to be in three, which is more usual when at sea, imposes a severe strain on one's energies. It has been found, however, that, with experience men can adapt themselves to this routine without suffering in health. When a ship's company is short-handed it may need to work in two watches. This was bad enough in the trawlers, in nearly all of which during the war the crews were " watch and watch about," but in a battleship where there is such a multiplicity of duties needing performance and daily ceremonial as well, I defy anybody to work in two watches for more than a week at a time without feeling very sorry for himself.

Harbour routine, however, provides a welcome relief from the rigours of life at sea, and the pipe " Liberty men fall in " signifies that in its turn half the ship's company can go ashore.

It may be asked to what extent the sea itself contributes to the hardships which need to be endured by the bluejacket. I started this book with a determination to say very little about the sea because this element has so frequently been described by others. The sea is an assemblage of hydrogenous molecules which extends over three-quarters of the earth's surface. When agitated by movements of air it transfers its agitation to such objects as may float upon it. I have often had occasion to attest the truth of this statement. It is recorded that Nelson was sick every time he went to sea.

CHAPTER IV

RANK AND MANNERS

THE bluejacket is a "natural man." Yet what a strange statement this appears to be when one considers the number of restrictions to which his life aboard ship is subject! It has already been suggested here that the bluejacket, in acquiring the kind of discipline which enables him to avoid panic in time of danger, was in a truer sense of the term "a natural man" than one who was wanting in this discipline. In some contexts it is true the word "natural" is contrasted with "artificial," and the sailor's life might be described as artificial inasmuch as it is deliberately moulded to a special pattern. Yet civilians who have but a cursory acquaintance with the bluejacket understand enough about him to admit that in a manner not yet analysed he is a natural man, more natural, in fact, than the vast majority of civilians. The bluejacket, without an effort on his part, has acquired the

reputation of being " manly." Not infrequently one has heard advice to the young " Join the Navy and it will make a man of you," the term " man " in this instance being used in a complimentary sense, as if to be a man was something rather rare and highly commendable.

Let us analyse a little more closely these terms " man " and " natural man." Obviously the term " man," as here used, has a meaning akin to the phrase " manly man," which, though at first sight tautological, seems to suggest that the person designated is not namby-pamby, but steadfast, direct, capable of endurance and free from bad physical habits. But while the possession of these copy-book virtues perhaps sufficiently distinguishes the " manly man " from the ridiculous " he-man " or " cave-man " of the " movies," it does not enable him to claim equality of spiritual stature with the " natural man." This latter term has philosophic implications that are complex and profound, for it suggests a highly desirable human type only capable of appearing in conditions far removed from those to which most of us are compelled to submit. Yet there is no need at this time of day to refute the arguments put forward by

those famous revolutionaries who maintained that " the natural man " was a person free from the restraints of civilisation. For obviously law and government are the inevitable consequences of man's social nature, and exist in some form or other even among the most primitive communities. There was more truth in the older philosophy, which declared that " man is a social animal." Therefore the bluejacket whose environment compels him to acquire this attribute of sociability in an unusual degree has a pre-eminent title to be described as the natural man, and this claim is even strengthened when it is remembered that unlike most civilians he lives in a state of compulsory good health. For good health is " natural," and even compulsory good health is more natural than the lack of health, even if this latter be the result of a manner of life freely chosen by the individual.

On the mess deck the bluejackets are crowded so close together that taciturnity and churlishness are at a discount. They acquire a social training which is far more than just " having the corners rubbed off," if one may use a colloquial expression. By the upholders of the Public School system it is commonly affirmed that the

practice of herding boys together in boarding-houses brings out their personalities and greatly improves their manners. These conditions of the boarding-house which are so favourable to youthful development are reproduced on the Lower Deck, the atmosphere of which has something in common with that of the aristocratic seminaries just mentioned. And besides the sociability and complete lack of self-consciousness which are induced by life on the Lower Deck, we here encounter a quality of manliness not so easily acquired in the great Public Schools, for life aboard ship is more severe, and the young sailor has the additional advantage of sharing serious responsibilities with older men. When once this habit of sociability has been established in a special hot-house or nursing-ground as is the Lower Deck, it becomes a second nature to such an extent that the blue-jacket spontaneously extends to others outside his circle the same friendliness and open-heartedness that have been acquired within it. Thus it comes about that he is able to converse with people of every social station without the least embarrassment, and in a manner that is neither servile nor presumptuous.

In what precise respect, it may be asked, does the life of the mess-deck provide this stimulus to sociability? Let the reader imagine a number of tables side by side each accommodating about twenty men seated on benches, or stools, as they are always called in the Navy. This is a "broadside mess"—that is to say, it is in a large compartment of the ship, containing a number of mess-tables, all of which, and the narrow spaces between them, are open to the view of anyone passing down the gangway. It will be understood that these messes will be on both port and starboard sides of the ship, while the centre part might be utilised for cooking galleys, offices or store-rooms. In order to accommodate the ship's company there are always an upper and lower mess-deck, even in destroyers, where the bluejackets are quartered beneath the forecastle. The most obvious characteristic of the broadside mess is that its inhabitants have no privacy. It is a noisy place, in which a large family of men partake of the fullness of social communion. There is no mumbling nor talking in undertones here. While Able-Seaman Smith and Able-Seaman Brown sitting next to each other may be indulging in "naval argument," a

form of converse which has rather unjustly been described as " vehement assertion followed by flat contradiction and personal abuse," Leading Seaman Robinson may be exchanging witticisms over the heads of his mess-mates, with Leading Seaman Baker three tables away. Stoker Wood passing down the gangway flings a subtle jibe at his friend Able-Seaman Miller, which leads to roars of laughter. This evokes a reply, swiftly conceived yet apposite, and Stoker Wood disappearing round the corner, at this distance being obliged to raise his voice to a shout delivers a Parthian shot.

In a variety of ships and on over a thousand occasions I have sat at table and have followed the cross-currents of banter and merriment passing from mess to mess, nor have I tired of the lively and vigorous personalities thrown together in this intimate association. For here are Englishmen, in some respects much more highly disciplined than their civilian brothers, yet in other respects relieved from social restraint, which causes shyness, self-consciousness and similar unattractive characteristics. This atmosphere, far removed from that of the drawing-room, is highly civilised, nevertheless. If lusty

young men when interchanging remarks occasionally choose to exercise their lungs in the way that Nature intended them to be exercised, this does not detract from the quality of their conversation. Moreover, being in an environment where at certain hours of the day they can make as much noise as they like, they are free to perform a certain action which in civilian life will soon become very rare except at concerts and special gatherings—they *sing*. And as a gift for music is extremely common among the English people, they sing in perfect tune, not in professional style, it is true, but yet naturally and without mannerism. At any time when off duty, whether on the mess-deck, in the gangways or bathrooms, they sing popular melodies as the fancy seizes them. There could be no truer indication that naval discipline, whatever it may have been in the past, is not to-day oppressive.

Not only is the habit of sociability fostered in the " broadside " messes, but there are additional opportunities for its acquirement on the upper deck where, in the intervals of " Stand Easy " or during dog watches, some hundreds of men may be taking their leisure. Every member of the

ship's company is at liberty to make friends with whom he will. No introductions are needed.

Inasmuch as he is "a natural man," the bluejacket has to this extent transcended class distinctions. He enjoys a great advantage in that he lives in an atmosphere in which the vulgar scramble for wealth is entirely unknown. The Navy is, as it were, an oasis in the desert of commercialism, a refuge from those elements in our civilisation of which we are most ashamed. The bluejacket has no respect for those class barriers which are founded upon money, for in his own little world he recognises only rank. It is necessary to develop this distinction between class and rank a little further. In an ideal state there would be no such thing as "class," but the institution of rank is of permanent value inasmuch as it is an aid to successful administration. In the civil services, for instance, there is no necessary social division between the senior and junior officers, but the governmental hierarchy is not the less firmly established for that. Again we find that academic institutions cannot dispense with the distinction of rank, for where one man has superior responsibility and is vested with authority over another, social communion

upon equal terms is not possible. It is to the credit of the bluejacket that he has no illusions upon this point. He appreciates it, of course, if his officers treat him with respect and take a friendly interest in his welfare, but he does not want them to be familiar with him. For the same reason he accepts it as quite natural that Petty Officers should maintain a certain distance from those placed immediately under their authority.

The disciplinary relationship cannot be properly upheld if a man regards his subordinate as a crony whose susceptibilities would be unduly ruffled were he to suffer correction or punishment. And again where such intimacy is tolerated it often has an objectionable result of a different kind inasmuch as it may enable the senior member in this relationship to obtain an unfair advantage over the junior. To illustrate this latter point, I may mention that it was the practice a few years ago in some of the colleges at a famous university to appoint as disciplinarians young men who had themselves only just taken their degrees, on the assumption that they would be able to control the vagaries of the undergraduates more easily than did the

middle-aged tutors who had preceded them. These youthful deans were encouraged to mix with the undergraduates on equal terms. Needless to say, the experiment was not successful because the undergraduates themselves resented the deans' too frequent intrusion upon their company, for they could not rid their minds of the unworthy suspicion that their private affairs might be made the subject of gossip in the Senior Common Room. In the Navy, however, grades of rank are not only well defined, but accepted by the bluejacket, who has no feeling of grievance or indignity in the presence of Authority, provided that Authority plays the game in accordance with the rules.

It often helps one to realise the true character of an institution, if one can picture how it would look if " turned upside down." It was my good fortune to witness such a " topsy-turvy " Navy in 1917, when the Russian " Imperial " yacht was lying in Devonport Harbour. This was just after the first revolution, so, as may be imagined, conditions were not quite normal. One of my mess-mates who had been a year at Archangel, and could talk Russian fairly well, had made friends with certain members of the

crew of the yacht and had been invited to visit it one afternoon. He allowed me to accompany him, and we were received most cordially by the Russian seamen, who conducted us to a sumptuously furnished State room. This had been set aside for the use of the men who lounged in luxurious sofas listening to a grand piano, on which one of their number was playing classical music. They were all in boisterous mood, and seemed, moreover, delighted to entertain a couple of representatives from the British Navy. We were given beer and cigarettes, of which they had an abundant supply. About half an hour after our arrival I heard the sounds of a violin in the adjoining compartment. Then a stout little bluejacket with a flat nose and black beard left the state room and presently returned in high glee, apparently having accomplished his mission. He was most voluble, and his friends laughed immoderately at the story he told. My mess-mate interpreted to me the gist of the remarks. It appeared that the violin sounds had emanated from an officer; the Tartar seamen has given him a penny "to take his music to the next street." Shortly afterwards the First Lieutenant entered the room

with the evening papers, which he deposited on the table for the use of the ship's company. No notice was taken of his arrival or departure, not even an encouraging smile or a "thank you" in return for such services dutifully rendered. What made the whole affair seem more ludicrous in my eyes was that the Russian officers wore British naval uniform, with which they had been temporarily fitted out. The crew of the Imperial yacht seemed to form a very happy community. One advantage they certainly possessed over the ship's company of a British man-of-war—they would never be required to go to battle!

The question has often been put to me: "What was the nature of the relationship established between the long service ratings and those of us who joined for hostilities only?" It is not easy to give a simple answer to this question, because, as may be imagined, the types of civilian who entered the Navy during the war were very numerous. Men of Public School and University education were seldom to be found on the Lower Deck, for they nearly all joined the Army on the first opportunity either as subalterns or privates. The obvious need was

for soldiers, and they responded to the call. The "temporary" seamen were, for the most part, either manual labourers or clerks, with an occasional sprinkling of commercial travellers. During the period of my own service, which brought me into contact with a variety of ship's companies, I only encountered two or three Lower Deck ratings who had academic attainments, hardly a sufficient number to enable me to form a generalisation. The remainder could be divided into two main classes. The first consisted of youngsters who joined the Navy at an age when they were sufficiently malleable to receive the Navy stamp. After a couple of years many of these in their manners and outlook became almost indistinguishable from long service ratings, so compelling are the social standards established on the Lower Deck. The others, a much smaller class, were too old to become themselves exactly like bluejackets, and each of them made an individual adjustment to his new environment. But there is no question that whether educated or uneducated, modest or immodest, capable or incapable, rich or poor, they one and all were submitted by the bluejackets to certain tests of character, by which

their status in this strange world of natural men where money values did not count, was determined with extraordinary precision. Although each new entrant was greeted with friendliness on the assumption that he was the equal or possibly the superior of his long-service mess-mates, these latter were not long in sizing him up. Tests for the purse-proud, tests for snobs, tests for the intellectually arrogant were instituted by slow degrees, casually, in that spirit of sustained and elaborate irony which seems a peculiar product of the Lower Deck.

It is noteworthy that the bluejacket seldom uses the word "manners," nor does the term "vulgarity" ever pass his lips. Where civilians would use the term "bad mannered," he says "ignorant." This Lower Deck idiom implies an assumption that manners can be taught. According to this valuation various degrees of good manners do not indicate a distinction of class, but the one person is more "ignorant" than the other—that is all. It is significant that they have no common expression for good manners, only the negative being paid the compliment of a separate name. This is because what we in civilian life describe as good

manners is indeed almost a necessity on the Lower Deck where people live, as it were, on top of one another; and only a falling away from this standard is deserving of special mention. Moreover, the term also implies the recognition that a knowledge of manners is the essential thing. If a man knows how to behave it is enough. If he fails in this, no matter what his other qualifications may be, he is still "ignorant." And many, indeed, were the occasions when the bluejackets were obliged to rebuke the new entries for their ignorance. I think that we may claim for ourselves the credit, however, that in most instances we took our reproofs with good humour. This was especially easy for us because the corrections were made without rancour or malice. The real sailors never made us feel that we were so far lacking in the graces of the mind as to deserve permanent exclusion from their intimacy. For we were merely "ignorant." With a little perseverance we should soon, in naval parlance, "pick it up."

On board a man-of-war there are innumerable occasions when thoughtfulness in small things is necessary if the communal life is to go smoothly.

At certain periods of the day, for instance, when the mess-decks and gangways are being cleaned with soap and water, it is occasionally necessary to traverse these spaces. But there are two ways of doing this. A man may either carefully thread his path so that he may avoid putting his boots on the part that has already been dried with a cloth or else he may neglect this precaution only to receive a good-natured shout of warning from the mess-deck sweeper or perhaps a more direct remonstrance. If you leave the door of the wash-place open when Leading Seaman Wilkinson is having a bath in a tub he will ask you if you were "born in a field." But it is, of course, in the mess itself that so many of the "new entries" required instruction in naval etiquette. At dinner-time, for instance, when the caterer of the mess is serving out the meat and vegetables, dividing out as accurately as he can supplies of each commodity upon twenty plates for twenty men, it goes ill with a recruit if he makes a grab for any one plate before the process of division is complete; because it might happen that the last plate might go short, and its contents would have to be supplemented by judicious subtractions from

other plates. The proper procedure is that the mess-mates must wait until the contents of all the twenty plates are equalised. I am afraid we were tiresome in innumerable ways. We put our boots on the stools after they had been newly scrubbed just before Divisions; we were always trying to get a wash just as the bathroom sweeper was cleaning down the decks for Quarters; we constantly left our gear about, and were politely asked if we required a wet nurse. Sometimes, when we were "cooks of the mess" we forgot to draw the spuds and bread, thus leaving our mess-mates panting for food. We carelessly threw spoons and forks down the scuppers when emptying kettles; we forgot to put the dinners of our absent mess-mates up to the galley when they were coming off watch at 12 o'clock. And we were even known to omit to put a lazy painter on the jumping ladder to enable the last man from the cutter to climb up to the boom. But on the whole, the sailors let us off very lightly, and only occasionally did their patience break down so that they forsook their tone of ironic remonstrance, and assumed that demeanour of severity which even the youngest Leading Sea-

man always has in reserve, when less formidable weapons have been found useless.

While the bluejacket has little respect for a person merely because he has money, his respect for "the higher education" is almost pathetic, and he is often under the illusion that a man possessed of a university degree must be equally proficient in modern languages, history, chemistry and mathematics, and in addition be familiar with all the processes of the law. I must have often disappointed my mess-mates by revealing my ignorance of matters upon which they expected me to enlighten them. Occasionally I was invited to compose letters on their behalf when some extraordinary circumstance arose. I remember conducting a long and acrimonious correspondence with the organist of a Non-Conformist chapel because he sat abstractedly at his instrument at inconvenient times of the day and would not allow the cleaner to perform her duties to the satisfaction of the deacons, the said cleaner being a relative of one of my messmates who realised the impropriety of transferring to paper the expressions he himself would have liked to employ in coping with the situation.

No account of the life and manners of the bluejacket would be complete if it did not make reference to the peculiar language which he has adopted for use among his shipmates. The sailor has taken all the most indecent expressions in the English tongue and has succeeded in depriving them of their original meaning by employing them as harmless pronouns and adjectives which merely serve the purpose of emphasis. Thus Navy language is the only form of speech which can never sink to indecency, for the simple reason that the indecent words have been rendered innocuous by misuse. When we listen, however, to the polite patter of a civilian we may often be on the edge of a precipice. It is true that for the nonce his vocabulary may seem beyond reproach, but we know that in addition to it there exists a wide range of disgusting expressions, not sterilised as the bluejacket has sterilised them, but live and potent. Although the civilian may not at present be using these expressions, we cannot dismiss from our minds the distressing possibility that he will. At any moment he may let us down with a bump. But Navy language has already reached rock bottom. And whatever

objections may be brought against it on the score of redundance, no impartial critic would deny that it is as pure as the driven snow!

Just as the dialects and accents of Scotland, Yorkshire, the Midlands, Sussex or Cornwall have their special attraction, so to those who view it in its right light "Navy language" also seems deserving of its "place under the sun." Anyone who attempts to translate the vernacular of the Lower Deck into the terms of civilian speech will certainly find that an element of expressiveness has been eliminated. The salt has lost some of its savour. I am not contending that sermons or state documents could, with propriety, be written in this vernacular, but at least, like any other dialect, it deserves the degree of vitality which it can, in fact, assert for itself. The persistence of Navy language is perhaps due to a certain "downrightness" and freedom from prudery, coupled with a mysterious but unmistakeable element of good humour which creeps into the idiom. If somebody says to me "Go away," I have every reason to be deeply offended. But the naval equivalents of this injunction, of which there are no fewer than a hundred and thirty-seven,

seem full of the warmth of human kindness.

"Navy language" is not, as is sometimes supposed, a form of swearing in which a man indulges only when he is in a bad temper. It is not a product of excitement, but a convention. When he goes ashore the bluejacket can adapt his manner of speech to the civilian standard without any difficulty, though he tells humorous stories of how he and his kind have failed to make this necessary adjustment. He especially delights in describing how the Navy-trained parrot asserted its too forceful personality in a suburban household. Occasionally superior authority rebukes the bluejacket for his peculiar lingo. It is related that an Able Seaman who in a moment of annoyance on account of something that had happened on the upper deck shouted out good-humouredly: "When is this — — ship going to pay off?" It so happened that the Captain was standing within earshot and heard the offending expression. He summoned the luckless seaman to his presence, and after calling him to attention, said: "I am determined to make you ashamed of using this bad language. For the next fortnight you will come to my cabin at 10 o'clock every

morning, no matter in whose company I may be nor what I may be doing, and you will repeat these words to me." "Aye, aye, sir," replied Able-Seaman Jones. The next morning the captain was seated in his cabin surrounded by naval officers of high degree, who were conducting an important conference, when at 10 o'clock precisely in walked Able-Seaman Jones, who asked in a loud voice: "When is this — — ship going to pay off?" to which question the captain gravely answered "Not yet." And following days brought similar surprises for the Captain's visitors. It is not recorded, however, in what degree this disciplinary treatment affected the language of Able-Seaman Jones.

In discussing the question of "Navy dialect," I wish to lay stress on the fact that but for a number of redundant adjectives and unusual pronouns, the language used by most bluejackets is not only, as a rule, quite correct grammatically, but contains a large vocabulary. In fact, in its abundant use of metaphor it is superior to ordinary civilian speech. It is, therefore, rather irritating to the bluejacket when in books purporting to deal with Navy life he finds that the authors have put into his mouth expres-

sions which could only have been uttered by the most ignorant guttersnipes. In popular books actually published since the war the Able-Seaman is represented as a low Billingsgate type only redeemed from pity and contempt by a final display of "heroism" during which he distinguishes himself by second-rate humour taken from the music-halls. May not this literary convention be now discarded?

CHAPTER V

NAVAL ÆSTHETICS

THE title "Naval Æsthetics" may at first sight appear to be a contradiction in terms. We have heard so much about the ruthless efficiency of the Navy. The decks are stripped for action. There is no room, we are told, for conscious elegancies in a man-of-war, which is an expression of power and competence and nothing else whatsoever. Yet a great philosopher once wrote, "When power steppeth down and cometh into visibleness, beauty I call such stepping down." The Navy does not aim directly at beauty, but it achieves it. This is because it not only expresses power, but the parade and pomp of power, it is power which "cometh into visibleness." In order to understand the relation of power to beauty one must reject the mischievous doctrine first propounded during the industrial era and still upheld by certain critics—namely, that if

in the creation of anything the artist limits it to the bare minimum that utilitarian requirements dictate, he will achieve not only power and expressiveness, but beauty as well. Such a claim must be disputed, for the bare minimum of creativeness which aims at the expression of function, using this term in its narrowest connotation, indicates extreme economy and even indigence rather than power. The concept of power means more than this, and is allied to richness of content and a superfluity of vigour. Such richness and superfluity, while they are the sign of power, also provide the occasion when beauty comes into being. Nowhere in the world is the ideal of efficiency pursued more insistently than in the Navy, yet nowhere is there such a scrupulous regard for *appearances*. The thing, whatever it is, must be "ship-shape," actions must not only fulfil their purpose, but show a certain distinction in their performance, the man himself must look smart, with a degree of smartness not easily attained by civilians. The personality of the bluejacket must necessarily be affected by the observance of these standards of visual art.

My first illustration of naval "æsthetics" is

a very simple one, but none the less significant. I choose this particular example because I noticed that a number of civilian witnesses were as much impressed by it as I was myself, although to me it was familiar. We happened to be fellow-passengers on a liner when it was our fortune to witness at no great distance from us a battleship and a light cruiser going in opposite directions. At the moment they were about to pass one another, what happened? Obviously there was no utilitarian necessity for anything in particular to happen. Yet if these ships, united in an identical service, had paid each other no recognition whatsoever there would have been a certain lack of expressiveness about them which would not have been pleasing to contemplate. On an occasion like this one realises the uses of ceremony. It was observed that on the upper deck of both vessels the men were lined up. While we were watching the phenomenon our interest was intensified by the trill of a bugle which sounded an opening crescendo known as the "Still." This came from the cruiser, and was a sign to the ship's company of that vessel to show appropriate respect to the battleship by standing at attention. Almost immediately the

compliment was returned, and from the battleship also came the sound of the "Still." As the commanding officer of the larger ship was senior to that of the smaller, it was for the former to determine the duration of the ceremony. After an appropriate interval of about two minutes the two-note bugle-call "Carry on" was borne across the water, and the light cruiser echoed the call. Officers and men were no longer lined up and standing to attention, but had resumed the work of the day. Man-of-war had met man-of-war with courtesy. The ritual was a symbol of power, for the extreme finish of the whole performance, brief though it was, impressed the spectators and fortified their conviction that the Navy had that superfluity of vigour which enabled it to do things not only economically and efficiently, but to do them with a certain flourish and aplomb. Moreover, it will be understood that the men and boys who are brought up in an environment in which acts of ceremonial courtesy are commonly practised are obviously the gainers by the experience. No matter from what social station they may spring, the participation in such ritual helps to form their minds in an aristocratic mould.

It may be of interest if I make reference to some other naval ceremonies. Perhaps the one which comes first to my mind is the Hoisting of the Colours, at which in large ships the Guard of Royal Marines operate. Guard and band are paraded, the bugle sounds the "Still," and the ensign is hoisted to the strains of the National Anthem. During this ceremony everybody on the upper deck faces aft and stands to attention, and a similar mark of respect is paid when the colours are hauled down at sunset and when the Last Post is sounded at 10 p.m. During the day-time there are various ceremonies which have as their object the assertion of naval authority. It would not be possible to dispense with these particular calls to assembly without a weakening of discipline. When, at Divisions, the whole ship's company is mustered on the upper deck and stands at attention, not only is the spectacle highly impressive, but it brings to the mind of every bluejacket in a way which does not cause him the least humiliation the fact that both the officers and Lower Deck ratings are dedicated to a common service. Even the physical drill which follows morning prayers has the character of a

pageant, and few sights are pleasanter to watch than the ship's company of a man-of-war in columns of four doubling around the upper deck to a brisk and merry tune. Again at Evening Quarters with a less degree of ceremony the hands are mustered, and while the assemblage of the men on the upper deck gives the First Lieutenant an opportunity of inspecting the living spaces, it also in a convenient manner enables the authorities to make sure that the whole ship's company is present.

Another rite even simpler than the mustering of men for Quarters takes place at 9 o'clock every evening when the officers go the Rounds. At this time of the day such parts of the ship's company as are to be found on the mess-decks are taking their ease, either writing letters, playing cards, or otherwise amusing themselves. When the bugle sounds a warning note they all stand to attention while the Officer of the Day, preceded by the Master-at-Arms, strides quickly along the gangways, scanning the decks to see that the hammocks are slung and the messes "squared up." This custom is one of those numerous reminders to the ship's company that they are in a man-of-war. Authority has passed

by, the "Carry on" is sounded, and the men resume their various occupations.

There is no need to describe at length the various ceremonies of Firing Salutes, for these must be familiar to everybody who has visited a naval port. The deep boom of the guns when heard a few miles away strikes a note of solemnity. This is yet another instance where a ritual is created for the sole purpose of showing respect and courtesy where such tributes are due. All the foregoing instances of naval æsthetics have to do with pomp and parade, which are an appropriate accompaniment of national power. That they are luxuries in so far as they do not directly contribute to the performance of such utilitarian functions as the navigation of the ship and the effective handling of the implements of war cannot be denied. But after all, human life would be incomplete without such luxuries, which are the legitimate expression of the social nature of man. Moreover, as was explained in the chapter on routine, the performance of naval ceremonial does not entail the employment of additional ratings for this purpose alone.

We may next consider a number of instances

of visual art in which, during the processes of work itself, a certain effect is aimed at, which cannot be better described than by the word "style." The Navy is very fond of style, and the bluejacket fully appreciates the meaning of this term. To begin with a minor example, I may mention the method in which a naval picquet boat comes alongside a gangway. Civilians are always impressed by this spectacle. As the little boat comes tearing along at fifteen knots, making a commotion in the water out of all proportion to its size, there is something about it which gives the impression of a veritable little battleship. Looking so trim with its decks newly scrubbed and brightly polished brass rim to the funnel, it has yet an aspect of determination due not only to its obvious quality of "dash," but to the presence of two martial-looking seamen sitting "for'ard" on the engine-room casing. When the coxswain rings down "slow" immediately the bowmen stand up with their boathooks held vertically in readiness to hook on. This operation is conducted with swiftness and decision. With the least degree of delay the passengers step out of the boat, the bowmen unhook with one motion,

shove off and resume their sitting posture, and the little vessel is once more seen ploughing its way through the foam, trailing a large White Ensign at the stern. The handling of a cutter provides another instance of style. Here as well special smartness is shown when coming to the gangway of a ship. On this occasion there is enacted the ceremony of tossing oars, unknown in the various forms of boating practised among civilians. With a sharp downward motion of the wrist the oars are jerked from the rowlocks and assume a vertical position, blades pointing fore and aft. This enables the cutter to come sufficiently close to the gangway for the passengers in the stern sheets to step off. Although for utilitarian purposes it would be sufficient for the inboard oars to be tossed, dictates of style decree uniformity and there is no doubt that a smart cutter's crew coming alongside a battleship is an attractive spectacle.

The routine of hoisting boats is also worthy of description in this context inasmuch as it is one of the most permanent and well-established elements of naval procedure. And it certainly expresses the quality of style in a high degree. All the stages of the operation proceed with a

logicality and smoothness pleasant to behold. First the falls or ropes hanging from the davits are overhauled long enough to reach the boats, the inboard ends of the falls are rove through blocks and led forward in two long lines on the upper deck ready to be manned by the seamen. The boats' crews hook their boats to the falls by slings or chains attached in the stern and bow. Then we hear the pipe "Both watches for exercise fall in, Up cutter." In a trice several hundred seamen have manned the falls. First they haul taut until both falls take the strain of the boat. The stage is now set for the final scene. On the command "Marry" the falls are united, and at the further injunction "Hoist away" the seamen double forward with the falls until they hear the words "High enough." The falls, however, cannot be made fast unless for a brief spell they are relieved of the weight of the boat. With this object the boat's crew pass the life-lines around the davit's head and under the slings, and secure them by two half hitches. The next order "Ease to the life-lines" explains itself. The falls are "walked back" a few feet, so that on the final command "Light to" they can be belayed

around the cleat or staghorn on the deck. The long loose ends of the falls are then "cheesed down"—that is to say, coiled in neat spirals near the gunwale. The whole operation takes less than three minutes. This particular evolution is characteristic inasmuch as it illustrates the element of convention which distinguishes naval procedure. When by long experience it is discovered that certain actions can be performed with the least expenditure of energy by adopting a certain sequence of operations, this sequence becomes codified; it develops into a ritual to which the men become so accustomed that they can perform it with amazing ease and dispatch. In all the ships of the Navy, boats are hoisted in the same way, and the identical commands are given.

This element of uniformity marks the achievement of style, for it is a sign that the operation is no longer in its experimental stage, but represents, as it were, a mature and finished concept. Style is, of course, shown in innumerable operations aboard ship, such as the weighing of anchors and other stages in the procedure for getting ready for sea and coming into harbour, while of course, gunnery drill, though

necessarily varied to suit the constantly developing machinery of the gun, is also given the extreme degree of formality which it is possible to attain. Nothing is done in accordance with whim. The Navy has indeed grasped the profound æsthetic principle that at the point where individual taste ends, there style begins.

So much for the actions which the men perform in the Navy. Let me now consider the sailors' objective environment. The mess-deck in its social aspect has already been discussed in these pages. What of its architectural qualities? Is not an element of style to be found here also? The milk-white tables and benches arranged in rows athwartships are, of course, the most conspicuous objects on the mess-decks, while attached to the ship's side above the table are the mess-shelves of shining aluminium in which the crockery is kept. At the inboard end of each table are placed the mess utensils, highly-polished tea-urn and cauldrons (called "kettles"), while the kit lockers, also aluminium, are arranged in a form of low walls or partitions separating one group of mess tables from the next. The hammocks, ditty-boxes and black enamelled cap-boxes have their special re-

ceptacles and are neatly stowed. The effect of this cleanliness and order combined as it is with a reposeful colour scheme of cream, silver and brown is intensely satisfying and there can be no question that the mess-deck forms an admirable background for the crowded scene of human life. This is an instance where restraint and uniformity lead to an artistic result, for it can easily be imagined that what may here be described as the architectural *ensemble* would entirely lose its style and distinction if it were possible for each mess to have its individual type of crockery or other utensils or if ditty-boxes, for instance, were painted all colours of the rainbow to individual fancy.

Other parts of the ship display the same neatness and finish. Needless to say the hours spent in painting and enamelling are very considerable. Yet the result justifies the effort, and a visitor to a battleship cannot but be impressed by the amount of care with which even the working spaces below decks have been given an attractive appearance. The Navy is never satisfied with bare utilitarian requirements, but insists upon a superlative standard of "snap" and "glitter."

The bluejacket does not use grand words to describe the particular type of artistic excellence which he admires. If a thing looks nice it is "Tiddly" and this word "Tiddly" can equally be employed to describe the bow of a cap ribbon or the manner in which the bridge, funnels and masts are arranged in a super-dreadnought. To one who comes into the Navy from outside the amount of interest shown by the bluejacket in ship design is quite astonishing. Even the youngest boy in the ship's company of a man-of-war will talk learnedly about the respective merits of the various vessels with which he is familiar and his remarks will show powers of keen observation. For the bluejacket, battleships take the place of architecture and this latter art would indeed be in a flourishing condition if civilians took as much interest in it as the sailors do in their ships.

Some writers seem to start with the assumption that every ship is beautiful, and especially every sailing ship. It is clear that such people are land-lubbers and have never discussed the subject of ship design with a sailor, or else they would have known that sailors are extremely critical of every ship they see, and not only

criticise a ship as a utilitarian object, but may also pass unfavourable comment upon its appearance; for it has been drilled into them that in no branch of activity can perfection be achieved except on rare occasions, and they have sufficient instinctive taste to realise that beauty does not come into being simply because a thing fulfils its practical purpose. The subject of ship design is such a large one that it could not be dealt with adequately except in a special treatise illustrated by numerous diagrams, and I do not propose to do more than make the briefest reference to it here. Suffice it to say that a modern man-of-war may be just as beautiful as the sailing ships of old, and while sometimes there may be a lapse from the highest standard and the naval architects have failed to achieve that combination of formality and expressiveness which is the hall-mark of great art, there can be no question that the sailors' floating home is in most instances pleasant to look at. Not only is it entirely free from the vulgarity which today is such a conspicuous feature in the design of structures erected on land, but it has the positive merit of being highly impressive and even elegant.

Let me next discuss the question of dress, for this is very important. The bluejacket's uniform has had a rather strange history. It now appears so perfect that it comes as a surprise to most people when they are informed that in its present form it is comparatively a recent invention, dating in fact from the 50's and 60's of the last century. And it is rather strange that at a time when civilian clothing was at its lowest ebb of ugliness such an extremely appropriate and artistic uniform should have been created for the naval sailor. In the first half of the seventeenth century a certain degree of rough uniformity in the men's clothing resulted from the practice of selling uniform on board ship. Red and grey were the commonest colours worn. It was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that blue and white were chosen for uniform. The black silk handkerchief commonly supposed to commemorate the death of Nelson was worn before that date, while the three rows of tape also preceded his victories. The idea of uniform, however, that is to say of a standard pattern of clothing was long in gaining acceptance from the naval authorities and it was customary even

as late as 1850 for captains to dress up their gigs' crews in the most fanciful costumes. It is recorded that in one contest the crew wore blue and white striped jerseys and red caps while the opposing crew were clad in duck kilts. Yet it may well be that the sailors' uniform of to-day has elements of permanence which were denied to its predecessors. In the first instance, blue and white, which are the only colours represented in it (excepting the gold and red badges) seem to be entirely harmonious with the predominant colours of sky and sea and whether this harmony has been achieved by accident or design it is scarcely conceivable that it will ever be violated in naval uniforms of the future.

Undoubtedly there is something very restful to the mind in the wearing of uniform. What a relief it is to have one's clothing determined by superior authority, especially when this clothing is not only agreeable in itself, but symbolises an honourable status! It must not be supposed that uniform need be dull and lacking in expressiveness. In implying rank and function it means far more than if it merely reflected individual taste. Yet without losing its

essential characteristic it can be modified to take account of a variety of social circumstances. The modern uniform of the bluejacket has several elements of flexibility. In the first instance we have the well-known "Number Ones" with which the public is familiar, because the sailor wears it when he goes on leave. This consists of a blue jumper and trousers and jersey, with, of course, the blue collar with three rows of tape. The cap, also blue, has a black ribbon with gold letters in front, spelling the name of the ship. In the summer months an agreeable inflection is achieved when the jersey is discarded, displaying a white flannel underneath with its band of blue jean round the neck, while a duck cap is substituted for the blue one. "Number Twos" differ from "Number Ones" in that they are without buttoned cuffs and have red badges instead of gold; this uniform is worn when the sailor goes ashore in home ports.

Another inflection occurs when the blue collar is omitted, for this indicates a species of undress suitable for wear in the early morning or after evening quarters, when the main ceremonies of the day are over. Duck suits, cut exactly to the same pattern as the blue are worn with black

silks, but without blue collars. This is the normal working rig. No civilian while employed in manual labour is half as becomingly dressed. This uniform appeals strongly to the naval authorities because it contributes to that "good appearance" which they value so highly. Moreover, they hold the view that if a man looks smart when he is working it has the effect of improving the quality of his work. A certain proportion of lower deck ratings disapprove of "Number Fives" and would favour their abolition on the ground that the labour of washing two duck suits a week is excessive. In modern ships, however, which are supplied with laundries and drying rooms this particular objection is partially removed. Members of the torpedo party and others working below decks are now allowed to wear overalls. Yet a sacrifice of style would certainly result were all the seamen to don a nondescript working dress such as is worn by dockyard labourers.

In summer time in the Mediterranean and in tropical and semi-tropical stations, yet another inflection of the bluejacket's uniform has been devised, namely the white drill suits cut to the same pattern as the duck suits but with a blue

collar, and a half-inch band of blue jean at the bottom of the jumper. I have never had an opportunity of seeing this uniform worn, but I can well believe that it is extremely smart. I may mention that neither "Number Ones" nor "Number Sixes," the two dress uniforms worn by the bluejackets cost more than £1 each, although made of good materials.

These variations of uniform are worth recounting inasmuch as they illustrate the degree of convention which governs the sailor's life. He is well dressed, it is true, but he must dress in accordance with rules. This is because he is not a private person. His life is dedicated to a cause. Yet this uniformity in habiliment does not seem to have the effect of destroying individuality. On the contrary it contributes to the formation of a background against which differences of temperament and personality stand out most vividly. There is one respect, however, in which the bluejackets' taste has been allowed expression in this matter of dress, but it is not individual taste, but the collective taste of the lower deck. It is not generally realised that the bluejacket's uniform as we know it owes a great deal to persistent efforts

of the sailors themselves to mould it in accordance with their own ideas. For instance, it was only after a prolonged agitation and when a great many punishments had been inflicted upon sailors for their breaches of discipline in ignoring official regulations concerning dress that the famous baggy trousers were accepted by the authorities. Even now no self-respecting bluejacket ever wears "purser's trousers," *i.e.*, trousers bought from the paymaster's store, because these are only 24 inches wide at the ankles, whereas 28 or 30 inches is the standard width acceptable to the sailors themselves. Consequently they get their clothes made ashore or by one of the "jewing" firms aboard ship. Again the opening or V in the "regulation" jumper is too high and there is no doubt that this upper garment also is greatly improved by being cut in accordance with the considered judgment of the men who have to wear it. The black silk handkerchief, too, instead of being tied at the back, leaving a thick and clumsy bend of silk beneath the terminal bow as in the "regulation" style, is invariably reversed and the loose ends of the handkerchief are tied much more neatly at the front. The uniform, as it

is worn now, seems to have the perfection of a folk-song, a thing gradually built up by the collective genius of many persons.

In this discussion upon naval æsthetics I have touched upon a variety of things—ceremonial, style in work, ship design and uniform. Yet one thing still remains and that is the person of the bluejacket himself. What does he look like? He is not an effeminate type. Two years' strenuous life in a training ship or shore establishment for boys have hardened his muscles before he ever undertook the duties of an able seaman. And after reaching that exalted station his muscles are hardened still further. Yet I do not recognise as a true picture of the sailor the thick-necked, coarse-featured type of man that he is invariably represented to be in the comic papers. Anyone is, however, at liberty to correct such pictorial impressions by taking a glance at the real article, should the opportunity arise.

CHAPTER VI

DOMESTIC REACTIONS

THE reader will scarcely need reminding that bluejackets comprise an entirely masculine society. Women are not allowed aboard a battleship except as visitors or guests on certain specified occasions. No women bluejackets have as yet been enlisted for service in the Royal Navy, nor is there any immediate prospect of the Admiralty regulations being modified in this respect. Women are undoubtedly capable of accepting discipline and steeling their nerves against panic in time of danger, but there are certain reasons why their admission into the Navy would be undesirable. This point is worthy of discussion, because not so long ago in an important daily newspaper a correspondent signing himself "ex-naval man" actually put forward the suggestion that he would welcome the inclusion of women in the complement of

a man-of-war, on the ground that a certain proportion of the work to be done aboard a ship is in the nature of housewifery and would, therefore be better accomplished by women. He also advanced the argument that the segregation of males on board a man-of-war represented a most unnatural state of society and hence the presence of women would be of advantage, inasmuch as it would restore to the bluejacket's life that feminine influence which at present it lacks. This correspondent has raised a question which would not have been seriously considered a few years ago, but nowadays when women are claiming for themselves the right to share in all the activities of men, I shall, perhaps, not be wasting the reader's time if I consider what are the objections, if any, to the employment of women bluejackets.

The necessity to provide quarters for women aboard battleships would greatly increase the problem of their planning and construction, but even if this difficulty could be surmounted one cannot help asking in what precise manner it is suggested that the women bluejackets should provide for the men the sort of companionship which the existence of two opposite sexes was

designed to bring about. If these Jill Tars are themselves to be celibate, the problem is as far from solution as ever, for instead of one unnatural state of celibacy there will be two such unnatural states in juxtaposition. Promiscuity is unthinkable and therefore we are led to the conclusion that the only way in which the women bluejacket on board a man-of-war could save the male bluejacket from the so-called evils of his segregation is by marrying him. But marriage normally results in the birth of children. As the naval architects, however, would go stark staring mad if they were required to find an appropriate place for nurseries in a man-of-war, we may for the moment rule out the possibility of the female bluejacket. As an historical fact, however, it is of interest to record that in the eighteenth century and earlier when armed frigates were commissioned for periods of as long as seven years, a certain number of sailors were allowed to take their wives to sea. As soon as a baby was expected, its mother was taken down to the gun deck and this is the origin of the phrase " Son of a Gun."

We must consider how the sailor's enforced

celibacy during his periods afloat can be reconciled with his claim to be a complete human being. Before, however, discussing the bluejacket's domestic problem, it is necessary to make some observations of a general nature about this attribute of masculinity which in a peculiar degree belongs to the naval type. I have already suggested that the bluejacket owes much to his segregation in a somewhat exclusive fraternity and that, in fact, it would be impossible for him to acquire the characteristics which distinguish him unless he had been subject to the discipline of being in continual social contact with his fellows. Certain virtues can only be acquired in a masculine society and no boy can grow to manhood, using this term in its best sense, unless the masculine element in him is fostered by special training and environment. The recognition of this fact does not entail in the slightest degree an anti-feminist bias, because it is notorious that the type of man brought up to endure the rigours of naval life is pleasing to woman. In fact, it is true to say that the bluejacket suffers from too great a popularity with the opposite sex. It is not that the uniform in itself acts as an aphrodisiac, though to a certain

extent this may be the case, but the friendliness of manner which the bluejacket has acquired through intimate association with his messmates, is extended without question to women. The Navy does not recognise a sex war.

It must be borne in mind that of the total number of bluejackets far more than half are married and of the remainder a large proportion are contemplating marriage. It is only in comparatively recent years that the problems of domesticity have loomed so large among the personnel of the Navy. This change of circumstance is partly due to the fact that after 1900, owing to the growth of the German Fleet a far greater proportion of His Majesty's ships were based in home waters than previously. This resulted in a great stimulus to marriage on the part of the bluejackets, the majority of whom served in ships which at fairly frequent intervals touched home ports. Moreover, the war period was pre-eminently the time of marrying and giving in marriage owing to the natural desire of the fighting man to leave issue behind him. In pre-war days when the bulk of the ships were either on the Mediterranean station or further east the

marriage state offered fewer attractions and the majority of bluejackets were bachelors. There is no question that the present condition of affairs is far preferable. Sailors should be encouraged to assume the responsibilities of parenthood, because on grounds of national policy it is desirable that this small percentage of adult males of exceptional health and vigour should replenish the stock of the English race.

Some of the problems of the lower deck life are rendered more acute owing to this change from a personnel composed principally of bachelors to one in which the married men predominate. Here economic facts are all important and there is no doubt that the married bluejacket and his wife must be rather expert in the arts of domestic management if they are to set up a home and bring up children properly fed and clad upon the remuneration received from the Navy. A certain number of married men in the service increase their income by washing their messmates' clothes, making uniforms to order or mending boots, but it stands to reason that this opportunity of earning a few extra shillings a week can only belong to a small percentage of a ship's company and the majority

of married men are obliged to supplement their marriage allowance by a substantial contribution from their own pay, leaving themselves the very minimum for personal expenses and forgoing nearly all the little luxuries and diversions which do so much to make the bluejackets' life more pleasant. So whatever economies may in future be contemplated in naval administration it may be hoped that the Lords of the Treasury will think twice before they make any further retrenchment here.

Now that the Admiralty has reverted to the pre-war disposition of fleets and the majority of ships are stationed in foreign waters the married bluejacket naturally appreciates a system of drafting by which as far as possible the majority of married men might be stationed in home waters.

The alternative to the policy of making marriage easy for bluejackets is that they should remain single until the end of their period of twelve years' service, by which time they are thirty years of age. Yet it cannot be said that this is altogether desirable. As an amateur student of eugenics I have on many occasions unobtrusively made enquiries concerning the

parentage of young men in the Navy who have appeared to be of exceptionally fine physique and character and in nearly every instance I have been informed that they not only belonged to a large family but were born of parents both of whom were married at an early age.

The married sailor has come to stay and it may be assumed that future naval policy will take account of this fact. The bluejacket is trained from boyhood in some of the arts of domesticity. While, however, he generally makes an admirable husband I should be sorry for the wife of a bluejacket unless she already possessed or was willing to acquire habits of cleanliness and tidiness approximating to the naval standard! One compensation the sailor has. His domestic life, because he experiences so little of it, is peculiarly precious to him. It is his special pride to open his ditty-box and show to his intimates aboard ship photographs of wife and children from whom he is separated.

A naval wedding is always a jolly affair and perhaps I may be pardoned if I here include some doggerel I once wrote on a matrimonial occasion. The lines were dedicated to a Chief

Petty Officer Telegraphist, who, I feel sure, will not take it amiss, should he see them in print. The words spelt in capitals are the names of destroyers in the flotilla in which we both served.

Hail, Chieftain of the Wireless Branch
Who most impetuously would launch
Your ship upon the perilous sea
Of matrimony! Pray receive
Our greeting; we should like to weave
A *GARLAND* fit for one so bold
Who can give up his *LIBERTY*
For thraldom, and a bachelor's peace
For troubles that may never cease
And dreadful dangers yet untold.
Forsooth, a *HARDY* man art thou,
And *LAUREL* leaves should crown thy brow!

We hope the sacred state you seek
Will never make you pine nor peak,
For some it is a hav'n of rest,
For others but a *HORNET'S* nest;
What seems to be a fairy glade
May prove a trap, an *AMBUSCADE*

Where Man's unwary steps may falter.
Yet may the matrimonial halter
Bring bliss to you that you may dwell
In *UNITY* and concord ever
With her whom you have chosen well,
The good, the beautiful, the clever.

A word of warning still is due
Lest you be taken by surprise,
Lest lovely lips you oft-times bless
Ere very many days advance
A *SPITFIRE* should become, and eyes
That once were fond should look askance;
For underneath an angel's form
The spirit of a *TIGRESS* lurks
Sometimes, and even Purser's Dirks
Or other weapons you possess
Will not avail whene'er the storm
Domestic sweeps o'er hapless you.
In such event your only chance
Is flight. Don't stay to break a *LANCE*
Nor vainly hope that you could be
A *VICTOR* there. Run like a *HIND*
From the *ATTACK*. Avoid all harm
By dashing off when war's *ALARM*
Should dang'rously insistent grow.

Yet we beseech you, never mind
This picture we pretend to see;
'T is but a wretched travesty
Of what the splendid truth will show—
Harmonious life with pots of money
And constant feast of cake and honey.
To register the happy hours
Which the future has in store,
Whether you be on ship or shore
In sunny breezes or in showers,
This little clock we give to you,
Which please accept in Friendship's name,
And may you always have the same
Familiar grin upon your lips
And never suffer an *ECLIPSE*.

After the lapse of ten years it is not easy to reconstruct in detail the life aboard the destroyers and other ships in which I served. And if I were to start describing the friends whom I made on the Lower Deck this book would alter its character and become an analysis of separate Navy types rather than a brief study of Lower Deck civilisation as a whole. It is of the essence of life aboard a ship that it is a home, not for the family unit, of course, using this term in its

ordinary sense, but of a larger family which is required to settle down to its own type of ordered domesticity. Military tasks must occupy much of the sailor's energies, but the arts of housewifery also claim his attention. The social atmosphere of the Navy, however, prevents the daily performance of menial acts becoming too irksome. While the wife of Able Seaman Thomas is standing in solitude in her back kitchen washing up after a meal and is perhaps thoroughly bored with the proceedings, her husband, when "Cook of the Mess," although engaged in a similar occupation, is at the same time indulging in a frolic. Having fetched the hot water from the galley he and his "opposite number," for the cooks of the mess always work in pairs, begin not too gently to remind their mess-mates that they "have had their time," that they are not at this present moment in Aggie Weston's (this is a reference to Miss Agnes Weston's homes for sailors, which, while ministering to creature comforts are also reputed to be immune from the harsher forms of naval discipline), and there follows a Titanic activity, during which the dirty plates are collected together and mess-mates lingering

over their meal either by flattery or objurgation are induced to expedite the process of dishing up, which they can best do by getting out of the cooks way as speedily as possible. The need for a hasty performance of their domestic duties, however, does not prevent the Cooks of the Mess from practising the arts of both dance and song in the intervals of executing the quick movements which are necessary between the end of the meal and the moment, not many minutes afterwards, when the clean crockery is neatly stowed on the mess shelves and the dirty water with refuse from the meal emptied down the scupper over the ship's side.

"Dishing up the mess" provides a scene of liveliness and is an occasion for good-humoured repartee, in which the gift of incisive speech so peculiar to the Lower Deck is exercised to the full. And what of the meal itself? It may be remarked at once that the food supplied to Naval ratings differs in some essential respects from that which may be obtained at the Cecil or the Savoy. Yet the quantity is adequate and undoubtedly the bluejackets thrive upon it and obtain from its sustenance an abounding vitality. In spite of this, however, Leading Signalman

Howard passing the ship's galley will shout out to the Chief Cook, "Are you going to give us anything we can eat to-day, or is it to be another endurance test?" and sitting next to me at breakfast Able-Seaman Curtis will remark with the utmost conviction: "This fish was never caught." Upon my inquiring in what manner the fish met with its decease, I am informed, "It gave itself up." During the war it used to be the practice for the mess-mates to prepare their own meals; that is to say, the meat was weighed out to each mess, where it was served up on the dish with the vegetables accompanying it. The duffs were prepared in the mess and the flour and currants mixed together by the bluejackets themselves. And very excellent duffs they were, either in the form of cake or suet dumpling. In the destroyers we made quite elaborate meals for ourselves from Navy rations and certain additions thereto which could be obtained from the canteen of the Depôt Ship, but this was in harbour only. At sea, where destroyers often remained for about seven days at a time, after the third day we used to be on salt pork and biscuits, the storage space for food aboard these vessels being very small. When, owing to the

movements of the ship, no article of crockery could be trusted to stay on the table, when the mess decks were awash and the galley fire just abaft the forec'sle had been put out by the waves, even a ship's biscuit seemed a welcome form of nourishment.

Tea we used to drink from large bowls, and the advantage of this arrangement was that when, owing to breakages, the number of bowls was but a moiety of the number of men in the mess, two or more would share one bowl between them. I always regarded this as a pleasant form of sociability, and was rather shocked to see, when visiting a man-of-war some years later, that the sailors had been provided with tea-cups. No longer, as in days of yore, can two chums sit down together sharing the sacred bowl, nor if one should take too deep a draught can the other look him seriously in the face and ask, as thousands of sailors have asked on similar occasions: "Was your father a deep sea diver?" Besides tea there is rum, formerly called "grog." In the days when Navy diet consisted almost entirely of salt meat and biscuits, the rum was regarded by the authorities as not so much a luxury as a medicinal necessity. When I joined

the service, however, the standard of living in the Navy had very greatly improved, and fresh vegetables were supplied to the troops when in home ports. But the practice of drawing the regulation tot of rum was almost universal. Except for Chief Petty Officers, who were allowed to have their rum neat, it was served in the form of what is known as three-water, and was in volume about half a pint. Ratings were forbidden to give their tot away, yet this rule was by no means strictly observed. Indeed, a social convention was established which regulated this very act of giving away one's tot of rum, should the occasion warrant such a sacrifice. Should A offer his tot to B, then B is not allowed to take the bowl from A and start drinking it at once, but in accordance with an old naval custom it is incumbent upon him to return the bowl to A so that his host might have a taste of it, after which ceremony B is free to drink the health of A.

The naval authorities are opposed to this practice of giving away tots of rum because it occasionally results in inebriety on the mess deck. One of my mess-mates, who unfortunately suffered from one of those maladies which

result in excessive obesity, was employed as a storekeeper, because he was no longer capable of great physical exertion. As he weighed twenty stone, it was appropriate that he should be nicknamed "Tubby." He was a man of few words and infinite good nature. When his birthday came, what could be more natural than that his mess-mates should give him their tots of rum! After dinner Tubby lay on the mess table, and there he remained for many hours. It was realised that this was a special occasion for the relaxation of discipline, for who could have the heart to move Tubby under such circumstances? The Master-at-Arms came by, the Officer of the Watch came by, but it was decided that if during the remainder of the day Tubby's mess-mates were willing to eat their meals at the edge of the table mutely staring at this substantial centre-piece, they were at liberty to do so. There was not a single member of the ship's company who did not come and steal a glance at Tubby, so magnificently comatose. Yet intoxication does not always result in a pleasant state of inactivity, and I may contrast with the case of Tubby that of another seaman who had drunk some rather poisonous beer at a foreign

port. On returning aboard ship he was in a state of such exhilaration that he divested himself of every stitch of his clothing and ran about the Upper Deck flapping his arms, followed by a flame, for he had stuffed a large newspaper behind and lit it with a match. When arrested he stoutly affirmed that he was Halley's Comet.

How does the sailor occupy his spare time aboard ship? Of course, the primary relaxation is sleep, for the sailor sleeps at any time of the day when he has an opportunity. The mess tables, the lockers, the stools, the deck and, in fact, any places which provide a horizontal plane of a few feet in area suffice to enable the sailor to "get his head down," as he himself describes the act of sinking into repose. The habit of keeping night watches and of getting up very early in the morning results in a capacity to sleep in conditions which to a civilian would seem extraordinarily uncomfortable. It need not be supposed, however, that the sailor spends the whole of his leisure in a horizontal posture. In every ship the mess deck is available for recreation during certain times of the day, and the sailors are free to write letters, play cards, and indulge in those arts of mat-making and em-

broidery in which they are expert. In the newest type of big ship smoking-rooms and reading-rooms are provided, but, of course, the principal place of social intercourse is the upper deck itself, where, after working hours, the men may be seen either in groups conversing or else pacing the deck. Two sailors, if they walk together, keep strictly in step, and at the moment when they must reverse their direction, in order that the flow of their talk should not be interrupted, they face each other as they turn right about and left about respectively. Sailors have often to take their walking exercise within a small space, and it is in accordance with the convention established among them that if they walk on deck they generally do so in this particular style. When they stand about at ease they may loll or dawdle, but they do not, after the manner of so many civilians, walk and dawdle at the same time.

"Jack ashore" is a well-known figure that has impressed itself upon the popular imagination. It is no longer customary, however, for the sailor "to paint the town red" after the manner of his forebears, and, indeed, the modern bluejacket is distinguished for his decorous behaviour in

public places. Sometimes in foreign ports individual members of a ship's company may be roughly handled by the natives, and if there is an occasion on which the bluejackets' pugnacity is justifiably aroused it may be taken for granted that there will be a very hearty scrap. The sailor, however, goes ashore for enjoyment, and not for the expression of his combative instincts. And he has a unique capacity for enjoyment. No other type of person seems capable of dancing, for instance, quite so light-heartedly as sailors dance. They have a good deal of practice in this particular art, for not only do they frequent dancing-halls ashore, but in many ships a piano may be brought on the upper deck in the evenings, and the sailors dance with each other to the accompaniment of music. I recollect also that we used to have sing-songs on the upper deck, and often have I heard the famous ditty of the old-time Navy, of which the chorus runs as follows:

"My Raggie's gone over the ocean,
My Raggie's gone over the sea,
My Raggie's gone over the ocean.
Please bring back my Raggie to me.

Bring back, oh, bring back,
Oh, bring back my Raggie to mee-ee-ee.
Bring back, oh, bring back,
Oh, bring back my Raggie to me."

The term "Raggie" is derived from the "brass rags" which are used for cleaning the guns, and as two men are generally told off together for such duties, it has gradually become descriptive of the friendships which are formed on the Lower Deck. Owing, however, to the frequency with which men are drafted away to different units, it is a common tragedy that such friendships are suddenly interrupted, perhaps never to be renewed. A bluejacket is indeed delighted, and may even make it an occasion for prolonged revelries ashore, if he is fortunate enough to come across a friend who was with him on a previous commission. And Commanders whose duty it is to dispense punishment for leave-breaking in these circumstances retain a certain sympathy with the offender who has met an old shipmate, or as he himself would describe it: "An old ship."

While the conditions of life afloat create a strong sense of comradeship such as can seldom

come into being in civilian society, the main anchor for the sailor's affections must in the vast majority of instances be his home. As I pass down the gangway of the Lower Mess Deck, Boy Macartney stops me and says, "Look, what do you think of these?" and then he shows me a number of trinkets he has bought ashore, saving up his very scanty pay during many weeks for this end. They are presents with which he is going to delight his mother and younger brothers and sisters when he goes on leave. The word "leave" has indeed a blissful meaning. To be away from the sea, "up the line," rejoices the sailor's heart, the line in this instance being the railway line which leads towards his home. Gaily he sets foot ashore, nor is the cup of his happiness upset merely because his Leave Ticket states only too plainly that he is to return aboard ship at a certain date, "and until then and no longer he is to be free from arrest."

CHAPTER VII

RELIGION ON THE LOWER DECK

A SOCIAL study of the Lower Deck would obviously be incomplete if no reference were made to the subject of religion. When I confess that I never made any attempt to canvass the religious views of my shipmates, my decision to include a chapter upon this particular topic may seem highly infelicitous. Nevertheless I propose to inflict upon the reader a few observations which occur to me on the subject of religion on the Lower Deck. During the early period of the war some excellent books were written by religious young men of academic attainments, who while serving in the Army as privates and subsequently as officers, found it incumbent upon themselves to study and even to criticise the "souls" of their companions. I am afraid I cannot undertake to follow the example and lay bare the souls of my messmates.

But for what it is worth I may make the statement that so far as my own investigations were able to carry me I could see nothing at all wrong with their souls.

As religion is a very wide term it appears desirable to attempt a definition of it before proceeding to discuss the religion of the sailor. According to one acceptation of the term a man's views about religion are especially concerned with the nature of the Godhead, the life after death and those subjects which are dealt with in the historic creeds of the Church. Yet a distinction must be drawn between theology and religion, for many who are learned in theology and will even argue heatedly about it, are fundamentally irreligious, and there are others, ignorant of theology, who yet have some guiding principle of life which gives stability to their characters. May we say of these latter that they have religion? A simple test may be applied to the activities of such persons, and this test enables us to ascertain whether their lives deserve to be described as religious. It may almost be taken as a definition of religion that when a man considers himself strictly as a means and never as an end, then he has religion. He

relies on something outside himself, and subordinates himself to this. The men who succeed in finding something to which their personalities are subordinated, and illumined and strengthened by that subordination, become formidable in whatever walk of life they have chosen. Now the Navy is a formidable institution, and contains a large number of formidable personalities, which are to be found not only among the officers, but among all ranks and ratings. It cannot be said that these men, animated by a common ideal, are self-seekers. Each of them regards himself not as an end but as a means, and so, in accordance with my definition, they may be described as religious. Whether their religion accords in every point with what is known as the Christian religion is another matter. It is important to note, however, that the Church gives its blessing to the Navy as it does to the Army. For the patriotic impulse is still associated with so much that is noble in the human spirit that the Church has often commended patriotism even when manifested in war.

The first paragraph of "The Articles of War" promulgated in the last century and still

posted in every Navy ship, states that commanding officers "shall cause the public worship of Almighty God according to the liturgy of the Church of England established by law to be solemnly, orderly and reverently performed in their respective ships." We also read that "Every person subject to this Act who shall be guilty of any profane oath, cursing, execration, drunkenness, uncleanness or other scandalous action in derogation of God's honour and corruption of good manners shall be dismissed from His Majesty's Service with disgrace or suffer such other punishment as is hereinafter mentioned." And a similar treatment is meted out to any officer "who shall be guilty of cruelty or of any fraudulent conduct." A still worse fate, however, awaits the sailor who is convicted of serious dereliction of duty in his capacity as a fighting man, for he may suffer the death penalty if "when any action or any service is commanded, he shall presume to delay or discourage the said action or service upon any pretence whatsoever or in the presence or vicinity of the enemy shall desert his post or sleep upon his watch." It is not, however, the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England that the

sailors have in mind when they go to action stations. The courage which is required of them differs from that of the Christian martyrs, for after enlistment the sailor is no longer a free agent. Many of his virtues are thrust upon him. The Christian of the Middle Ages, whether Catholic or Protestant, who went to the stake for his religion, was always given an opportunity to disavow his faith and thus save his life. A sailor, however, is not likely at the last moment to be harrowed by an intellectual doubt as to whether the defence of England were really worth fighting for. Yet there is no Jingo talk in the Navy. The word "Empire" I never once heard mentioned.

Nine-tenths of the "action stations" are in confined compartments. During battle the men have no chance of emerging from the gun turrets or from the numerous stations below decks, where torpedomen, stokers, wireless telegraphists, shipwrights and others work. A peculiarity of naval warfare which differentiates it from warfare on land is that until the moment when the ship is actually struck by a shell or a torpedo the conditions of life aboard ship are identical with those prevailing in peace time

during exercises at sea. When the horrid little action bell rings the men hurry to their posts and perform duties a thousand times rehearsed. Only a few officers and men in control positions see the enemy or are conscious of how the battle is progressing. Have the sailors thoughts of death or of any life after death, when in such an emergency? I do not know. During the Battle of Jutland many found their graves in the sea. Many met their death by terrific explosions of magazines. Others who were killed by gun fire aboard the big ships were buried ashore. Silently, very neatly, in accordance with the most precise instructions as to the procedure, we dug long trenches on a northern coast. And then there was a great funeral with slow march.

Naval warfare is an affair of organisation, of numerous conferences in which tactics are evolved in the light of cold logic. But in addition is the stern will which at the critical moment can use the instruments of war with intrepidity. Yet seldom, as at Zeebrugge, can the individual sailor take part in personal combat. As a rule his duties are prescribed for him with the utmost detail and all he has to do is to stick to his post and obey orders. Even captains of ships are

allowed but a limited amount of initiative when a great fleet goes to battle and must, of course, take instructions from the commander-in-chief. In the latter part of the war, however, when the convoy system came into force for the protection of merchant shipping, the commanding officers of escorting destroyers had innumerable opportunities of exercising their individual judgment in their encounters with enemy submarines. In the flotilla in which I served, a lieutenant in command of one of the destroyers espied the wake of a torpedo heading directly towards a vessel belonging to the convoy. It was possible to fend the intended blow, but only by steaming at full speed and interposing his own ship between the torpedo and the convoy. The destroyer was sunk and its commanding officer and nearly all the ship's company lost their lives. The men in the escort flotillas led a particularly strenuous existence. Besides the ordinary naval routine and constant "sea-time" in rough weather, which in a destroyer brings its own discomforts, even without a war, they had to endure the perils of rescuing in small boats the drowning passengers from torpedoed ships. Many a time did destroyers come up Plymouth

Sound with their decks crowded with people picked up out of the water.

It would, perhaps, interest the reader to know how individual seamen react towards the circumstances of war. I could write much upon this theme, but confine myself to relating three incidents, each of which is illuminating in its own way. A petty officer of my acquaintance had a shipmate, also a petty officer, who was, in fact, his greatest friend. When off duty they were inseparable. Just before Jutland one of them was drafted to a destroyer leader, a beautiful and glittering little vessel, which on almost its maiden trip went up in a cloud of thick, black smoke. The surviving petty officer, nick-named "Clubs," as he was physical training instructor and the strongest man on the ship, was asked the tactless question whether his friend was one of the missing. "Yes," he replied, "a six-inch shell hit him in the pit of the stomach." Then he turned away with a loud laugh. The second incident concerns a leading seaman who, through a misadventure, had broken his leave by a few hours. His destroyer went to sea without him and a few days later was lost with all hands. Meanwhile the leading seaman had reported to

our ship and was put in my own mess. When he heard of the disaster he was convulsed with grief. He felt that he ought to have been with his shipmates and shared their fate. Offers of sympathy would here have been presumptuous, and we could do nothing but leave him in his tears and the agony of his remorse.

The third story I shall relate is of a remarkable conversation between two boy telegraphists, or Sparkers, as the members of the wireless branch are called in the Navy. There came alongside us a destroyer of which the funnel had been shot away and the forecastle was also much battered. On the bridge stood a Boy Sparker and a chum of his in my own ship shouted, "What's up, Curly?" to which question he replied, "What do you mean, 'what's up?'" Then his friend pointed to the funnel. By this time the Boy Sparker in the ship which showed such authentic evidence of having been to the wars was really angry, and he asked in very gruff tones, "Can't we come back *as we like?*"

I have already suggested that the sailor has an element of religion inasmuch as he regards himself as a means and not an end. But he is

also an attendant at church on Sunday mornings. Lower deck ratings who do not belong to the Church of England are allowed to declare their allegiance to the Church of Rome, the Wesleyans, the Baptists or Congregationalists, but the Navy cannot always undertake to give them the choice of participating in several forms of public worship. On the other hand, I have not noticed that the occasional failure of the Navy to make such provision is counted as a grievance. Religious intolerance of any kind has no place in the intellectual make-up of the bluejacket, and while he never scoffs at religion he views its formalities with almost as much detachment as if he belonged to some pre-Christian order of civilisation. Although it might be contended that he loses something by his omission to interest himself in the various religious movements which have influenced the civilian population of England, he is to this extent the gainer in that he has escaped also the perversions of piety occasionally associated with these movements. By foreign critics the Anglo-Saxon nations have occasionally been accused of religious "humbug," so it is worth while to record that an in-

stitution so essentially English as the Navy is free from this defect.

The bluejacket is not inclined to express opinions upon points of religious doctrine or ceremonial which he knows he is not learned enough to discuss, but on the other hand he reserves to himself the right to judge every man's pretensions by reference to his practice. He is quite willing to tolerate any expression of pietism which is a genuine indication of religious zeal. For instance one finds in nearly every ship a few bluejackets who kneel down to pray in the presence of their messmates every night before turning in their hammocks. The men in question do not incur any odium on that account. Not a single unkind word is uttered and as far as possible a reverent silence is observed in the mess while such devotions are proceeding. It is but natural, however, that the conduct of these men of religious habit should be subject to special scrutiny, and any evidence of lack of principle in their common dealings with their fellows is strictly counted against them. In one of the destroyers of the flotilla in which I served there was an engine room artificer who not only led a blameless life, but

was renowned for the regularity of his nocturnal genuflexions before his Maker. His shipmates, however, had occasion to think less of his piety when this particular destroyer was torpedoed and sunk, for with a hammer in his hand the highly skilful mechanic sat upon the only raft and resolutely struck at anybody who would share it with him.

If the bluejacket does not view it with favour when particular members of the ship's company acclaim their piety on the mess deck by formal acts of worship, it is not because he is hostile to religion as such, but because his profoundest social instincts lead him to discountenance any behaviour which tends to separate individuals from the common family. On the other hand he is glad to participate in the official service conducted by the recognised authorities, for in this instance he is surrounded by his intimates and the service is conducted in a cheerful and friendly atmosphere. The mess deck is gaily decorated with bunting, the tables are removed and stools or benches arranged preparatory to the assemblage of the ship's company. Looking immaculate in their smartest uniform the sailors troop in. Not one but has his hair beautifully

brushed, not one but gives the impression of extreme cleanliness. Abounding health, vigour and content can be read in their faces. Only half an hour ago they had attended Sunday Divisions. Between " Quarters clean guns " and this latter ceremony they had been granted only a few minutes in which to clean themselves. Much hustle had ensued and swift movements of practised hands had resulted in boots being polished and white caps made whiter still and the famous uniform in all its detail carefully adjusted. But now the hustle was over and they sit in pleasant expectation as the service is about to begin. They sing the hymns and psalms lustily, and listen with respectful attention to the sermon.

It is not always realised that the conditions of naval routine are responsible for the bluejacket's assumption of a rather unusual attitude towards divine service. On no occasion in civilian life can the attendants at church be filled with such a sense of benevolence and of gratitude to the powers that be as is felt by the average bluejacket when he goes to church aboard ship. He knows that whether the hymn sung is his favourite hymn or not, whether the

doctrines promulgated by the chaplain are to his liking or not, it is quite inconceivable except at a sudden crisis in time of war that the chief bos'n's mate should shout out "Both watches for exercise fall in." Consequently a naval chaplain starts with a great advantage. He has the goodwill of his congregation to an extent to which few civilian pastors can claim it.

While Navy church is invariably a huge success, and the chaplain is assured of a friendly audience when he preaches, it is not easy for him to become acquainted with individual members of the ship's company. A number of naval chaplains will perhaps agree with me in maintaining that it is to a certain extent a hindrance to their efficiency as priests that they live "aft" and have the status of officers. In the discussion on Rank and Manners I had occasion to point out that the absence of social contact between officers and men, except in so far as this is necessary for the giving of orders, is a prerequisite of discipline. A priest, however, is as one that serves and his work may to a certain extent be handicapped if a distinction of rank separates him from the troops. In connection

with this point I may record an experience that befell myself. One of the various chaplains whom it was my privilege to meet during the war used to invite me to his cabin rather frequently and it was our habit to discuss matters of special interest to ourselves, such as politics and literature. Yet it reached my ears that he was suspected of trying to extract from me information concerning lower deck ratings with the object of communicating it to the wardroom. So both for his sake and my own I was obliged if not to discontinue my visits entirely, to make them very much more rare. In another ship the chaplain insisted upon having a cabin rigged up for himself under the forecastle and this undoubtedly made it more easy for him to establish social contact with the sailors. The same chaplain gave illustrated lectures on the housing question, in which many of the ship's company had reason to be interested, and he also told them about his work in a slum settlement in the East End of London. It was a disappointment to him that in spite of his earnest appeals he did not succeed in persuading many of them to attend Holy Communion, but the reader may imagine his

pleasure when on leaving the ship the blue-jackets presented him with a sum of money spontaneously collected amongst themselves with a request that he should use it for forwarding the objects of his East End Settlement.

As the Church of England is by law established the Navy acknowledges a special obligation to uphold the dignity of its representatives. Occasionally, however, a mishap may spoil the effect which is desired. A few years ago a quite particularly lordly Bishop had come aboard a certain light cruiser in order to administer Confirmation. But just as the Bishop was walking along the upper deck two ordinary seamen engaging in a mock combat accidentally pushed the distinguished visitor down the hatchway. The Bishop reported the event to the authorities, with a result that the seamen were put in the first lieutenant's report. But the lieutenant, who had never before had to deal with so heinous a crime, declined to handle the case himself and referred it to the commander, who in turn referred it to the captain. But even the captain did not think himself equal to the occasion and the culprits were arraigned before a still more exalted tribunal. By this time the

Bishop's anger was appeased and it was probably due to a kindly intervention on his part that the Admiral dismissed the case not, however, without giving it as his opinion that " You young boys are too damned careless."

CHAPTER VIII

NAVAL POLITICS

THE bluejacket, like the naval officer on active service, is cut off from politics inasmuch as he is not allowed to engage in propaganda or make speeches for or against public measures. He has, however, a vote. It would appear that in practice the degree of his political activity does not differ from that of nine-tenths of the civilian population, who are also content to register their parliamentary and municipal votes and are either too busy or are disinclined to take a more prominent part in public life. Yet the bluejacket is cut off from politics in a sense in which these voluntary abstainers from speech-making and propaganda are not. This is because his life aboard a ship is, politically speaking, a sheltered one. He inhabits a state within a state. When one considers to what extent the intellectual development of the average civilian is

stimulated by a study of politics it might appear that the bluejackets suffer from a certain limitation of outlook in being thus withdrawn from a field of activity in which the genius of the English people has found distinguished expression. But the bluejacket of to-day when opportunity permits, reads the newspapers and maintains a keen interest in public affairs. Yet there is always this feeling of detachment, this knowledge that he is not a free citizen in the sense in which his civilian brothers can claim to be. The phrase "Naval Politics" cannot be usefully employed in connection with the bluejacket's opinions on ordinary political matters, for sailors constitute a separate class necessarily withdrawn from the turmoil of political strife. There is, however, one subject related to high politics concerning which the opinion of the bluejacket may be of some interest to the public, namely, the subject of war.

On the outbreak of war it was very commonly asserted both by the learned and unlearned that the war represented "the breakdown of civilisation." We now realise that whatever the war may have been (and it may be described in various terms of disapprobation)

it was not that. A very little knowledge of history suffices to show that nations at the very summit of their cultural attainments were constantly engaged in war. In 1914 the bluejacket did not yield to the various forms of hysteria which were so prevalent, not only among "uneducated" civilians but also among scholars who ought to have known better, and he never supposed that the war was the end or the breakdown of civilisation. Indeed he could scarcely do this when the possibility of war was itself the excuse for the establishment of the highly elaborate and polished "civilisation" existing in the little floating townships with which he was familiar. He had taken this civilisation for granted and it came as somewhat of a surprise to him that in points he regarded as of social importance he so often found it necessary to instruct those civilians who were introduced to him as fellow combatants in the ships of war. Although without the benefit of training in history or philosophy the bluejackets instinctively adopted towards the war an attitude of dignity and composure. They did not even indulge in the habit so common among civilians of describing the

Germans as Huns. They had good reason to keep their heads, for the routine of war differed little from that of peace. Moreover, the practice of war was to them to a certain extent a professional matter, and even the enemy received from the British bluejacket whatever respect was due to his competence in the science of armed encounter on the sea. This attitude of chivalry towards the foe is part of naval tradition.

To illustrate the difference between the naval point of view and that of a section of civilians at home I may refer to an incident that occurred towards the end of the war. After an engagement in which some German ships were sunk the distinguished naval officer in charge of the detachment which had accomplished this result, after describing the action in terms of suitable distinctness and brevity, also reported that he had been "fortunate enough to save" a number of the enemy, who had been picked up out of the water. This Nelsonian phrase was regarded by certain civilian critics as evidence of "disloyalty to the Allied cause." But nevertheless the sailors continued their time-honoured practice of rescuing

the foe when he was threatened by drowning.

So much for the sailor's attitude to war. Is it possible, it may be asked, that there can be any internal politics in a battleship? Now, politics have come to be so much identified with democratic politics, the method of government suitable to an equalitarian state that the mere mention of the word politics in connection with the ship's company of a man-of-war almost savours of mutiny. The democratic principle is not fitted to pervade the whole of human life, for even in those countries where political sovereignty resides with the many, a system of "government from above" requires to be set up in the Army and Navy, in the departments of State, and in certain educational and disciplinary institutions, not to mention a number of industrial concerns which could not thrive if their administration were determined by a majority vote. Any association, however, between rulers and ruled has a political significance, and this is my justification for employing the term "naval politics."

A fixed hierarchy of rank is accepted by the bluejacket as inevitable, and is all the more easily borne by him inasmuch as every officer

owes to his superior the same kind of respect which an A.B. owes to a leading seaman and a leading seaman to a petty officer. There is no need to attempt a summary of "King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions," for civilians are acquainted with the various grades of rank and rating in the service from admiral to boy, and they are also aware that the Admiralty besides specifying the several duties appertaining to each individual also gives him certain rights, and everyone serving in the Navy has a status which cannot be forfeited except for good reasons. A man may be punished for misdemeanour either by stoppage of pay or leave or by being given extra work, or he may even be disrated to a lower grade of service, but he cannot in vulgar parlance "get the sack" unless for some serious offence such as would render him unfit to belong to the Navy. It is of course imperative that breaches of discipline should be dealt with at the discretion of the captain of the ship in accordance with the Naval Regulations. A man-of-war is not a place where a trial by jury would operate well. The general degree of satisfaction which is now felt with the administration of justice in the Navy is due

to the conviction founded upon experience that each case is impartially weighed up and decisions are arrived at in the spirit of gravity and patience. Far away are the days when officers might take advantage of their authority and give severe punishment for small offences. Any rating, whether he is a chief petty officer or an ordinary seaman if dissatisfied with his treatment has the right to appeal to a higher court and engage legal assistance if he desires it. Nor is it now permissible for any sailor to strike another when on duty.

So while it is true that the bluejacket's life is surrounded by restrictions it compares favourably with that of his brother in the merchant service, who is not only worse housed and worse fed, but has few of the statutory rights and privileges which enable the bluejacket to retain his self-respect. A master mariner has still power over his crew which no naval captain is at liberty to exercise, and can dismiss the hands at will, even to the extent of leaving them stranded in foreign ports, should he be in the humour to punish them in this manner for some real or imagined offence. Another respect in which the crew of a man-of-war have an ad-

vantage over that of a merchant ship is that the former are aware that their lives are never placed at the tender mercies of "finance." I could mention the name of a destroyer which after being sent into dock for alterations to its superstructure was found to have a rather dangerous roll which occasionally alarmed the crew. But they had the advantage of knowing that the ship was not sent out in an unseaworthy condition because it had been over insured!

There is no doubt that in many respects the type of civilisation achieved in the Navy differs considerably from that which prevails ashore. The sailor has indeed to a certain extent surrendered his freedom, but he has secured some very substantial benefits in exchange. In the Navy the administration of justice is characterised by an unusual degree of humanity. This is because all the persons concerned, namely, the judge, whether he is captain, commander or first lieutenant, and the delinquents of whatever grade who stand up to receive their punishment, belong to one great family. Able Seaman Jenkins, who has unfortunately been indicted for being ten hours adrift after long leave, is a valuable member of the ship's company and

his sentence will not be so severe as to crush his manly spirit. It is true he was rather impudent in pleading in extenuation of his guilt that his grandmother had taken him to the station and put him in the wrong train; but the commander was so tired of hearing a series of more hackneyed excuses for similar misdeeds that although he sentenced Able Seaman Jenkins to forfeit four days' pay and four days' leave he bears him no grudge. The desire to put the crime of leave-breaking in its most favourable light has been an immense stimulus to the inventive powers of lower deck ratings, and innumerable stories are told illustrating the measure of success obtained. One of the best perhaps is that of the ship's corporal who could not for the life of him remember whether he belonged to H.M.S. *Yarmouth,* stationed at Weymouth, or H.M.S. *Weymouth,* stationed at Yarmouth.

It will be understood that the majority of cases on which the officers are required to adjudicate concern the alleged failures of lower deck ratings to perform their duties to the satisfaction of those set immediately over them. While, of course, there must be occasionally a

clash of wills and temperaments tending to produce a certain amount of heat, nevertheless, it is surprising how smoothly the governmental system works. One of the basic principles of discipline aboard ship is that wherever possible the word of the senior rating must be upheld against that of the junior. An officer is naturally loath to support an able seamen for instance, who alleges unjust treatment at the hands of a petty officer, because to do so would be a direct incitement to insubordination. The senior ratings, however, are not likely to abuse their powers over the junior because they know that there is a court of appeal which would not spare them if they were proved at fault. Moreover, the leading seamen and petty officers are not intent upon making trouble, for they realise that if the work for which they are held responsible is to be properly done they must secure the goodwill of their subordinates. Occasionally, of course, a serious breach of discipline may be committed, in which case the punishment is proportionately heavy, but the vast majority of offences are slight. To be put in the commander's report is commonly described as " scoring a rattle " or to be " in the rattle."

It is quite remarkably easy to "score a rattle," and a man is not branded with infamy in consequence. This is one of the prime distinctions between naval and civilian administration of justice. To appear before a magistrate must be a solemn and rather humiliating experience. But after "scoring a rattle" a seaman will generally be subject to the friendly banter of his mess-mates, who will by no means treat him as an outcast. This standard of valuation lightens naval discipline and helps to make it acceptable to the troops.

For obvious reasons the ship's company of a man-of-war cannot be a self-governing body. It has, however, been found desirable by the naval authorities to establish a medium whereby lower deck ratings might submit to the Admiralty proposals affecting their own interests. The Inter-Port Welfare Committee is of recent growth, dating, in fact, from 1922, but its establishment marks a stage in the development of naval organisation. Of course, the committee is not vested with any executive power, but it performs the useful function of enabling the lower deck representatives to state requests and explain grievances without incurring the

suspicion of indiscipline. According to naval law any mutual discussion of grievance between the parties aggrieved may be counted as mutiny, so it will be readily understood what a useful purpose is served by the Welfare Committee. It is important to note that to each request the Admiralty gives a printed reply explaining the reasons for its acceptance or rejection. Needless to say, many requests concern matters of payment and allowances, and if these latter petitions are occasionally refused it is for the adequate reason that the Admiralty is bound by the restrictions imposed upon it by the Treasury.

Some of the other requests are of special interest, inasmuch as they indicate certain changes in the mentality of the lower deck. I shall first refer to the attempts which have been made to abolish the bluejacket's uniform. It was asserted that this uniform was held in slight esteem by people ashore. I have often contended in conversation with leading seamen and others that nobody of any social consequence looks down upon their uniform. In fact it not only is highly respected, but extraordinarily popular among nine-tenths of the civilian popu-

lation. I have myself invariably found that when wearing the uniform I am treated by strangers with more friendliness than when clothed in my nondescript civilians. Whether in train or on 'bus or tram or in any other public place, everybody seems to have a welcoming glance for the bluejacket. The uniform is a singularly smart one, far more distinguished in fact, than any dress which the conventions of civilian attire allow men to wear at the present day. It is, moreover, comfortable and very cheap. This last consideration should surely appeal to the sailors. I should imagine that the only people who sniff at the bluejacket's uniuniform are themselves beneath him in social status and consist perhaps of a number of young women who think it grander to be seen dancing with a naval rating who has a peaked cap slightly resembling that worn by the officers than to dance with a "Jack Tar."

A few years ago, however, the petty officers secured the privilege of abandoning their bluejacket's uniform for a "fore and aft rig." There is no question that many of them who at the time were in favour of the change have since repented of it. For not only has it in-

creased their expenses, but it has rendered their relationship with the troops more difficult because the new type of petty officers uniform is not a working dress. I can recollect how we "temporary seamen" serving during the war were much impressed by the prowess of our petty officers in all such branches of work as we ourselves were called upon to undertake. One particular petty officer of my acquaintance would look encouragingly at a group of seamen attempting to do a piece of work and upon their failure to do it would say, "Now then, girls, get out of the way," and he would perform prodigies of strength and single-handed do the job to our immense admiration. We took our instructions from stoutly-built men who, though clad like ourselves in most respects, were yet adequately differentiated from us by the conspicuous badge of cross anchors and crown worn on the left arm; and we felt that these men by wearing the blue collar conferred great honour on our common uniform.

For good or for evil those days are now over, and it is decreed that the modern petty officer should wear a type of clothing approximating to the civilian standard. I feel that for the

benefit of my friends on the lower deck who are hostile to the bluejacket's uniform, it is only fair to communicate to them a certain rumour which has reached my ears. Admirals and other naval officers of high degree are very tired of being mistaken for railway porters. It is not that they have the least objection to carrying luggage for short-sighted old ladies, but there is always the difficulty about the tip. They can scarcely refuse the tip as that would embarrass the donors, but they have the uneasy feeling that they are depriving the honest porter of his job. Not unnaturally they are seeking for a new habiliment and are only waiting for the seamen and stokers to express a sufficient degree of dissatisfaction with their uniforms to steal it from them and adopt it for their own use. They will then be able to cut a dash ashore such as they have never done hitherto, and incidentally will be free from the necessity to perform casual labour at the railway stations. Grades of rank among officers will be determined by the calibre of their trousers, an Admiral of the Fleet flapping round his ankles a width of cloth not less than fifty inches. Meanwhile the seamen ratings will be con-

demned to wear very stiff collars, tight jackets with many buttons and peg-topped trousers of the civilian type, which, of course, need continual pressing if they are to appear in the least degree presentable. The wooden trouser presses will be scrubbed daily and their brass fittings polished during the breakfast hour.

The Welfare Committee has also advocated the abolition of the broadside mess. Yet the bluejacket's highly developed social life could not have come into being if each separate mess had been represented as a watertight compartment, a little isolated community cut off from intimate association with the one next to it.

It would be of interest if one were able to judge to what extent this objection to the broadside mess is shared by the bluejackets themselves. The body which puts these requests to the Admiralty contains representatives from every branch of rating serving on the lower deck. I do not know the precise proportions of voting powers accorded to the various branches, but if it were found for instance, that the bluejackets, who must number about seventy per cent of the total personnel, were in a permanent minority and if the engine room

artificers, artizans, writers and stewards dominated the society, that might perhaps provide an explanation of this apparent desire to introduce civilian standards of life into the Navy. For these latter ratings, living in closed compartments, as it were, do not participate in the throbbing life of the broadside messes, and perhaps have an imperfect appreciation of it. Nobody desires the Navy to remain ever the same. A battleship is a far more comfortable place to live in to-day than it was a few years ago. Better bathroom accommodation, reading-rooms, smoking-rooms and increased spaciousness everywhere make the conditions of the service pleasanter. Yet it may be urged that progress need not always be sought in any attempt to approximate the conditions of naval life to those prevailing in civilian society.

In some respects the bluejacket has an advantage over his civilian brother, so it is undesirable that through any fit of self-depreciation he should surrender his own birthright and try to copy the modes and manners of a landlubber. Moreover, and this is a very important point, the society of bluejackets is uncompromisingly masculine and should be very chary

of introducing into its environment characteristics savouring of effeminacy. Plain food, fresh air, strenuous activity are factors which have contributed to the creation of the bluejacket type, and there appears no reason to suppose it would be improved by the introduction of such things as dainty tea services, linen tablecloths, cushions, curtains, carpets or deckchairs. Many of us who came to the Navy as strangers during the war acknowledge our sojourn there to have been the most significant experience of our lives. The dominant impression we received was of bare boards and brotherhood. Perhaps we may be pardoned, therefore, if we feel a little concern lest modern "reformers" in getting rid of the one, also sacrifice the other. For even if we are absent from the ships of war, they are often in our thoughts, and we cannot altogether detach ourselves from them. A certain severity and simplicity must surely distinguish the surroundings of a bluejacket aboard ship, and, above all, he needs open mess-decks if his communal life is to prosper.

CHAPTER IX

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Pacifists argue that if all the nations of the earth were disarmed they would not only save themselves from the sufferings attendant upon the waging of war, but could expend their national resources entirely upon the arts of peace. They believe that the title deeds which justify a nation in the possession of vast territories and wealth are independent of the nation's capacity to defend itself. While pacifists, however, can deduce from their initial premisses the conclusion that all expenditure upon the Navy is wasted, educationalists must necessarily be well disposed towards an institution which is extraordinarily adept in the art of training men.

There is a general assumption among writers on education that in order to be qualified to discuss this question a man must himself have been engaged in pedagogy of some kind. But

experience may not only be active, but passive. The gorgeously dressed huntsmen riding to hounds are expert in the science of the chase, but the fox may also be allowed his opinion upon the subject. It is my fortune or misfortune to be a much-educated man. With varying degrees of humility I have sat at the feet of many teachers. As I have had some years' experience of the society of bluejackets I may venture to recall my impressions of their intellectual attainments and capacities. I came to the conclusion that theirs is essentially an aristocratic society in which, however, the traditional attributes of the gentleman are associated with a certain roughness of manner which differentiate the bluejacket from those who inhabit the drawing-rooms of the "cultured" classes. In the qualities which go to make an attractive type of manhood the bluejacket at his best could scarcely find his equal in any class of the civilian population, but it must be admitted that the difficult acquirement known as "learning" is also of importance, and the bluejacket necessarily lacks this. In judging him, however, it is desirable to draw a sharp distinction between intelligence and learning. I have encountered

on the mess-deck men possessing natural abilities which, if cultivated to the full, would, I am sure, have enabled them to achieve great distinction " outside." Very many bluejackets have not only a robust common sense, but an instinctive respect for the things most worthy of admiration in human life. Others have impressed me by their ready wit and social gifts which found the most perfect field for expression on the mess-deck itself. Civilian life as at present constituted could perhaps find little place for such gaiety of spirit.

Whether it is possible to combine the virtues of the bluejacket with those of the scholar is a question to which I do not attempt to give an answer. Undoubtedly, however, in the Navy, as in the Army, the standard of general knowledge among all ratings is rapidly improving. Besides the technical tests which the men must undergo before they gain promotion to a higher grade there are educational tests which include mathematics, English, geography, history and other subjects. If the bluejacket has not entered into the heritage of English literature it is because the opportunity of doing so has not yet been vouchsafed to him. But it is not neces-

sary for the national welfare that the whole population should be ardent readers of books and there are a variety of types of human culture which may result when the literary factor is not unduly stressed. Where the Navy sets an example is in its capacity to take even the roughest elements of the civilian population, and in an astonishingly small space of time teach them both manliness and manners.

Nobody who is interested in education can have escaped reading about the new methods of intellectual training whereby young people are left very much to themselves and are enabled to use their own judgment as to what instruction they want and the time at which they will receive it. As the fancy seizes them they study geometry, modern languages or history, and their games are also left to their own discretion. It is supposed to be a sacred principle that nobody should give them a direct command. I have not myself had the opportunity of forming an opinion concerning the human product which results from these experiments, but having encountered quite a number of youngsters who have come straight from the naval training establishments such as Shotley

Barracks and H.M.S. *Impregnable*, I have come to the conclusion that there is very much to be said for the type of boy who has been trained to do as he is told, and to do it with alacrity.

Right through the Navy the same element of discipline pervades all the educative processes. At the Gunnery and Torpedo Schools, for instance, where ratings go to receive such technical instruction as will entitle them to promotion, the instruction is both given and received in a spirit of resolution. I have attended a course in H.M.S. *Vernon*, the shore establishment at Portsmouth, where men are instructed in the mechanism of torpedoes, mines, searchlights and the electrical equipment of a battleship and have heard a warrant officer address an audience of a hundred and fifty men. The strictest silence was observed, and while the lecturer explained his points by diagrams on the blackboard he would occasionally take a searching glance over the crowded benches and immediately pick out anybody who was guilty of inattention. If he had occasion to reprove the same person twice, the delinquent was ordered to leave the lecture-room and report to the regulating office. This was a serious punish-

ment, because it meant that he would be sent back to his ship and would thus forfeit the opportunity of finishing his course at the Torpedo School. In an ordinary school, of course, such large classes would be quite properly condemned, but in the Navy we find the fulfilment of the only two conditions which could justify them; in the first place the students are carefully graded so that their experience and aptitudes especially qualify them to master the subjects under discussion, and secondly there is a strictness of discipline which insures that they pay heed to their instructors. Such large classes in the lecture-room, however, are supplemented by much smaller ones, in which groups of eight or ten men are taught by Petty Officers to handle the actual instruments which the lecturer has been describing. The method of teaching by question and answer is commonly employed in the Navy, and in some ships one encounters officers who take a particular pleasure in testing the seamen's knowledge upon various points of procedure. I once heard a commissioned gunner say to a seaman on the upper deck, "What would you do if I were to fall overboard?" and the

immediate answer was "Let go No. 1 depth charge, sir." I may explain for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with the term, that a depth charge is an anti-submarine device, a small mine timed to explode soon after it has been dropped from the ship's stern, and is calculated to destroy everything within a radius of many yards.

A definite routine, if it is not too rigorous and is enforced under conditions which provide for the cultivation of both mind and body, is obviously a benefit to young people. Moreover, though this may seem a paradoxical statement, it is only upon a substratum of discipline that the qualities of personal charm can make their appearance in the individual. It has often occurred to me that much good would result if instead of scrapping our obsolete warships it were possible to allow them to be utilised as training ships in which boys, after leaving the elementary schools, could have the advantage of a few months' instruction under the supervision of Chief Petty Officers pensioned from the Royal Navy. The expenses connected with such a project ought not to be an insuperable objection to its fulfilment. There is nothing

to prevent vocational training being pursued simultaneously with that given in discipline and athletics. Instead of inveighing against the Public School system which, whatever its imperfections may be, enables boys to acquire habits of industry and independence of character, it would be a more genuine expression of the democratic spirit if an attempt were made to give to the less fortunate members of the community a chance of availing themselves of such admirable substitutes for Public Schools as these ships might possibly become. Many details would, of course, require to be settled before such an extension of our educational system could be agreed upon by the authorities concerned. It is worth remembering, however, that the Lower Deck method of living is extraordinarily economical, for when people sleep in hammocks they occupy very little room, and their accommodation per head costs but a tithe of what it would do if they were housed in the usual manner. A very large number of boys might come in relays to these obsolete battleships, and, for a time, at least, be subject to a far healthier influence than modern city life provides. While the Navy

exists primarily for the defence of the country, it as well to remember that it is also an educational institution of a unique kind and has some valuable hints to offer to schoolmasters and others who are interested in the training of boys and men.

Unfortunately only a small proportion of the population of these islands has an opportunity of benefiting by contact with a very special type of culture which is essentially an English product. The number of civilians who, as members of the Territorials, can become acquainted or renew their acquaintance with Army life, is very considerable, and undoubtedly they enjoy the experience. The Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, however, which corresponds to the Territorials is necessarily a small force, because Navy ships have nearly always a full complement and cannot undertake to receive many supernumerary ratings. This force, commanded by highly distinguished officers, is a valuable link between the Navy and the civilian population, and its members not only undergo training in H.M.S. *President* and other depôts, but have the privilege of going to sea in a man-of-war for a few weeks every year. If this link

could be strengthened by the utilisation of old battleships in the manner I have suggested, the people of England, as a whole, would have a chance of entering more fully into a heritage which is their own.

There is a common impression that bluejackets are largely a hereditary class and that the sailor's profession is handed down from father to son for many generations. And indeed such "hereditary" sailors can be found whose families have lived for several hundred years in a naval port, but the depôts or barracks which entrants to the Royal Navy must join, contain a mixed population. Cockneys are predominant in a ship commissioned at Chatham, and the west countrymen in a Devonport ship, while the Hampshire men naturally enlist at Portsmouth, but in all three depôts a large proportion of the personnel comes from the industrial North, from inland towns where presumably there is no direct inducement for boys to choose a seafaring life. The accents of Lancashire and Yorkshire can be heard in almost every Navy ship and Birmingham sends a large contingent. The Scotch are also prominent. During the war the Southern Irish, chiefly in Devonport ships, were

well represented, and very popular they usually were, and first-rate sailors. It might be possible to detect certain minor differences in the social characteristics of ships companies derived from different depôts, but what mattered most was the Navy stamp which marked them all and made them kin.

I have occasionally been asked whether naval life is especially suitable for certain types of men and whether certain other types should be strongly advised not to enlist as seamen. In particular, it has been suggested to me that young men of a philosophic turn of mind would do well to avoid the Navy. I am convinced that this is quite a wrong judgment, for there can be few social environments in which the philosophic mind can find so much to interest and inspire it. No bluejacket incurs disfavour among his messmates on account of his intellectual interests. Of course, the Navy has no place for criminals and it is particularly strict in dealing with offenders against the ordinary laws which require to be enforced in every civilised community. For instance, theft is summarily dealt with by dismissal from the Service, but as evidence that bluejackets have an unusually

high standard of personal honour in this matter of respecting the property of others I may record that in every ship's company to which I belonged it was customary for the messmates to keep unlocked their little wooden "ditty-boxes" which often contained money and other valuables, nor was this mutual confidence misplaced. There are, however, two types of people, who, though not belonging to the criminal class, might nevertheless find life in the Navy very difficult—the lazy type and the incorrigibly quick-tempered type. If a man is too slothful to contribute his fair share of the work which is required in order to establish the recognised standard of comfort and cleanliness on the mess-deck, his life will not be made too pleasant for him. Quick temper also, is apt to bring its own punishment. Those who, when reproved by a superior, "answer back" or "argue the point,"—to use the Lower Deck expression,—are obviously asking for trouble. Nearly every sailor, however, has on occasion "argued the point" and has had to learn by experience the inadvisability of this procedure.

A bluejacket is in little danger of acquiring

the attributes of a spoilt child. If he can get through a day's work without receiving correction or reprimand he has indeed done well. From time to time, it is true, the ship's company is praised, and at Divisions or on some other ceremonial occasion the Captain or Commander will compliment the men upon the manner in which they have jointly discharged some special duty. Such praise, however, although it naturally gives pleasure to its recipients, is general and formal whereas the censure which may be incurred during the round of daily work is personal and particular. It is inconceivable that a whole society of men could achieve an unrelaxing standard of efficiency in any other atmosphere. If one were to concentrate attention upon this aspect of Naval routine one might conclude that there was something harsh and unpleasant about it, but the discipline is lightened by the humour and geniality which at any moment may make its surprising appearance and dispel whatever resentment one might have harboured against such a severe and strenuous calling. It is this swift succession of different social moods which makes the pattern of Navy life so intensely vivid. At one time the seaman

may feel only too conscious of having chosen a profession which was exacting from him the last ounce of endurance, yet, not many hours afterwards he would be justified in saying to himself —Surely in no other place can there be so much happiness and laughter as in a man-of-war! Extreme discipline and extreme light-heartedness go side by side in the Navy. It is black and white in contrast with a civilian grey.

An educational standard such as is achieved on the Lower Deck cannot be judged by an "academic" measure, for it is expressed not only by visible accomplishments, but by a development of character which has not its exact counterpart in civilian life. Certain types of people almost instinctively assume an intellectual arrogance when they visit the seats of learning, but they would acknowledge such an attitude to be extremely inappropriate on the occasion of their encounter with the society of bluejackets. It is not my intention here to suggest in what manner it might be possible for the bluejacket to develop into something which he is not, for I am content if I can describe him as he is. And I think I am interpreting the opinions of the vast majority of those who

served as "temporary A.B.'s" in saying that we should feel pleased if, as a result of our war experiences, we have acquired qualities such as would entitle us to claim a slight resemblance to bluejackets ourselves.

CHAPTER X

WAR AND PEACE

In the foregoing pages I have treated of the Navy as a social institution, and it may perhaps occur to the reader that I occasionally seem to have lost sight of the fact that it is also an instrument of war. I have spoken of the Navy as if it were a permanent part of England, something which England could not do without and still remain herself. Why did I write this book? it may be asked. Surely not for fun nor from any particular love of writing for its own sake. Was it a debt to the Navy that I felt it my duty to discharge, or was there some deeper impulse half unknown to myself, an uneasy feeling that what I was writing was not so much a description of a culture with a prolonged future before it, but an obituary? God forbid that this should be so. It will be a sad day for England if the human qualities, of which the Royal Navy has so long been the nursery, should cease to find expression in the national life.

Since the Armistice I think I have read nearly every war book which has appeared in the English language. Nobody can acquaint himself with these graphic accounts by men who have suffered the horrors of the trenches and still retain any false notions concerning the glamour of war. But if the Jingo has his illusions the pacifist also has his, and a political entity such as the British Commonwealth does not readily strip itself of the realities of national power for the sake of an idea however attractively represented.

Reading these war books I have come across again and again one particular statement which is made with great feeling. It is affirmed that the old men made the last war, and in their political hatred or industrial greed sent a whole generation of youths to their death. It is true, of course, that old men have a preponderant influence in the world. It always has been so, and it always will be. It is a preposterous idea, however, that old men are less generous or idealistic than the young. I have myself never encountered among my own acquaintance these pitiless old men who were anxious to sacrifice their sons and grandsons on the altar of Mars.

It would be equally unjust to say that it was the women both old and young who drove the men to the war. Most of the old men would have enlisted themselves had they been allowed to do so, and among the women how many ardent Boadiceas and Joans there must have been who felt it a grievance that they were not allowed to brave shot and shell and lead the troops to battle. It cannot truthfully be said that the principal instigators and supporters of the war were those who required in others a vicarious courage. Nor have the soldiers, who returned from the trenches with a true knowledge of war, been one and all converted to the doctrines of an uncompromising pacifism.

In holding up to public esteem the qualities of the sailor I might be accused of looking upon war as something desirable in itself. One might compose a syllogism in the following terms. "The sailor is worthy of our admiration. His characteristics are the outcome of his training for war. Therefore, war must itself be admirable." But such reasoning is incorrect. War is not itself admirable any more than revolution is admirable. Revolution is something which humanity keeps in reserve, for

otherwise bad governments might never have an end. And war also is something held in reserve.

Even if humanity, in spite of the suffering which war entails, cannot bring itself altogether to renounce the possibility of war, it is urged in some quarters that the Navy must give way to new arms of attack and defence. Hostile critics of the Navy occasionally allow that a few submarine and small craft which would be able to dodge the attacks of the aeroplanes might still serve a useful purpose. They appear to forget, however, that the function of a man-of-war is not to dive into the depths of the ocean as soon as the enemy appears, but to stand up to him and give him a hammering. For this purpose it is likely that the big ship, and the big ship alone, will be able to carry engines of destruction sufficiently powerful to cope with the new assailants from the air. So perhaps it is too soon to write the bluejacket's obituary, and he may continue to serve the nation in his traditional capacity.

If, however, all fighting forces are doomed eventually to disappear by the action of the human impulses which are leading men through-

out the world to tackle the problem of disarmament, then the society of tomorrow must find room for the display of every virtue practised in the age of warfare; for otherwise its claim to be the spiritual equal of the latter will be hollow and presumptuous. The little state within a state which the naval men inhabits has elements which might, with advantage, be introduced into civilian life. If great factories, workshops and commercial concerns, for instance, would so organise themselves that all the men engaged in them, whether as employers or employees, could acquire something of the spirit which prevails in the Navy, our industrial strife would soon be at an end. A circumstance which contributes to the degree of good will existing between officers and men of the Royal Navy is the fact that the Admiral accompanies the fleet to sea, and instead of organising campaigns from the rear as military officers of high degree are compelled to do, he participates in all the dangers of battle. The men of the fleet see the Admiral's flag floating in the breeze, and they know that he and they are comrades.

Liberty, equality, fraternity were flaming watchwords. Complete liberty and equality

there can never be among men. The ideal of fraternity is by far the most practical of the three, and it finds nowhere a greater measure of fulfilment than in the humane company of those who serve under the White Ensign.